Last day to submit online PUA application is tomorrow. PAGE 6
'Stop defending unconstitutional policy on SSI benefits' PAGE 9

Hafa Adai!

75¢

Saipan Tribune

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SUP YOGA ON THE BEACH
A group of beachgoers are seen performing a yoga pose as they balance on a stand-up paddleboard in the waters off Micro Beach in front of the Hyatt Regency Saipan. This group is participating in what is called SUP yoga, or standup paddleboard yoga.
NEIL FAMA

ON FINAL PASSAGE OF $1.9T AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN

'Much-needed relief for NMI'

» Kilili says Rescue Plan will keep CNMI healthy and economically sound

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Yesterday's passage of the landmark $1.9-trillion relief bill, the American Rescue Plan of 2021, in the U.S. Congress and its expected speedy approval by President Joseph R. Biden drew widespread praise and sighs of relief for CNMI officials who see the additional infusion of funds as a lifeline for the CNMI's parched economy.

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios said in a statement that its passage means the CNMI will receive much-needed relief for the government and its people,

See RELIEF on Page 4

Tinian Chamber backs Kilili's HR 560

By BEA CABRERA
beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

The Tinian Chamber of Commerce has expressed support for Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan's (Ind-MP) H.R. 560 or the "Northern Mariana Islands Legal Residents Relief Act of 2021" that has been incorporated into President Joe Biden's comprehensive immigration bill.

In a letter addressed to Sablan yesterday and signed by Tinian Chamber of Commerce board of directors vice chair Don A. Farrell, the Tinian Chamber conveyed its support for H.R. 560, which proposes to extend Marianas permanent residence status to long-term foreign workers

See TINIAN on Page 4

Apatang wants full-blown LibDay 2021

Apatang

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

While last year's Fourth of July Liberation Day celebration was a one-day very limited on-the-ground celebration due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Saipan Mayor Da-

See APATANG on Page 4

'Together we can create a better CNMI

By MIKE SABLAN
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL OF ECONOMIC ADVISERS
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

…We know that pandemic aid will eventually stop, which is why we are acting now to establish a strategic plan for the CNMI's economic recovery. Navigating our way out of this crisis will require rethinking our priorities, exploring new ideas, and working together as fellow residents to effect change.

See story on Page 3

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:
- **Red:** Least safe
- **Orange**
- **Yellow**
- **Blue**
- **Green:** Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

AT A GLANCE

As of 7pm, March 11, 2021

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	7,756	2	7,758
Recovered	7,600	1	7,601
Active	22	2	24
Deaths	133	0	133
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			131, 839

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	146	0	146
Traced via Travel Screening	120	0	120
Traced via Community Screening	26	0	26
Deaths	2	0	2
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			26,131*
Days since last community transmission			204

VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI

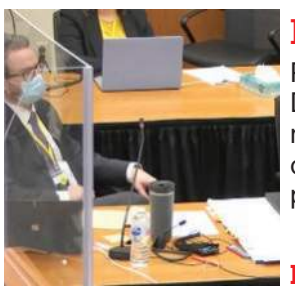
Saipan:	Tinian:	Rota:
Dose 1: 11,044	Dose 1: 662	Dose 1: 745
Dose 2: 8,436	Dose 2: 138	Dose 2: 345

*Total count includes the number of persons tested on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. With guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CHCC has opted not to report active and recovered cases.

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.

INSIDE

BUSINESS
The Mariana Lighthouse Saipan will open its doors today for a soft opening.
PAGE 15



NATION
Potential jurors in Derek Chauvin's murder trial return to continue the selection process.
PAGE 15

SCIENCE & TECH
China and Russia said they will build a lunar research station, possibly on the moon's surface.
PAGE 18

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GOT A NEWS TIP? TEL: 235-6397 / 235-2440 FAX: 235-3740 EMAIL: editor@saipantribune.com

Local

Hofschneider introduces bill to create CEDA

Senate President Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian) has introduced a bill that will transform the Commonwealth Development Authority into the Commonwealth Economic Development Authority—the primary agency tasked with the economic development of the CNMI.

Hofschneider

The creation of CEDA is one of the recommendations of the Governor's Council of Economic Advisers, which says the economic development of the Commonwealth can best be served by a targeted approach aimed at the needs of the economy and providing CDA with the mandate and resources to support this effort.

Under Senate Bill 22-36 that Hofschneider prefiled Tuesday, CEDA will be empowered with this mandate of economic development, with the flexibility to pursue industries and investments that will strengthen the CNMI economy.

Hofschneider stated in the bill that the Commonwealth economy requires a renewed focus on economic development and diversification to provide jobs and economic opportunities. He said a targeted focus of a single government entity to plan for and implement efforts to cultivate a stronger, more diversified economy for the Commonwealth is necessary. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

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TOGETHER WE CAN create a better CNMI

By MIKE SABLAN
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Mike Sablan is vice president of Triple J Enterprises, Inc., a certified public accountant, and chairperson of the Domestic Policy and Recovery Committee for the Governor's Council of Economic Advisers. As an advisory council for Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, the GCEA's mission is to improve the quality of life in the CNMI for all residents.

To say that the tourism industry, the major driving force for the CNMI economy, took a blow from the COVID-19 pandemic would be an understatement.

The industry was devastated. Visitor arrivals ceased, and a ripple effect of business closures, job losses, and plummeting revenues immediately followed. Residents who were still recovering from the aftermath of Super Typhoon Yutu were hit even harder by the pandemic. Many turned to food relief, rental assistance, and Pandemic Unemployment Assistance to survive.

Last Saturday morning while driving along Beach Road, the pandemic's impact on families was evident by the long line of cars waiting to get into the Garapan Fishing Base to receive food commodities made possible by the CNMI Office of Grants Management. I later learned that some patiently waited in line for three hours to get their food items.

We are deeply grateful to the federal government for providing us the much-needed support, but we know that pandemic aid will eventually stop, which is why we are acting now to establish a strategic plan for the CNMI's economic recovery.

Navigating our way out of this crisis will require rethinking our priorities, exploring new ideas, and working together as fellow residents to effect change. When Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios created the Governor's Council of Economic Advisers through Executive Order 2020-11, our mission was clear: to recommend a plan that would ignite strategic economic development in the CNMI and ultimately improve the overall quality of life for all residents. Co-chairperson and business leader Jerry Tan and local leaders gathered to work to analyze the state of the economy.

After a series of dialogues with public and private sector stakeholders, the Council then identified 13 initiatives that would serve as a roadmap toward the islands' economic recovery.

GCEA started with the initiative to transform destination sites through its Public Private Partnership program. Support for this campaign has been overwhelming, with 41 groups adopting 30 sites. More are stepping forward to help make the CNMI a world-class destination.

And while we wait to welcome visitors back safely, we can generate economic activity and recover some of the jobs and tax revenues that the tourism industry used to provide by capitalizing on the over half-a-billion dollars in federal funds available for pandemic and typhoon recovery-related projects. To get these critical projects off the ground, the Council is actively working with Gov. Torres' Cabinet to explore opportunities to streamline the permitting processes. Together we have identified a number of improvements that can be made without compromising the importance of safeguarding our environment, preserving our historical finds, and protecting our coastal areas. Fast-tracking steps in the process could mean that larger projects can get underway quicker.

The vulnerability of the CNMI's tourism industry has been exposed when the pandemic struck. And while we call for transformational changes to ensure that we become more competitive in the global tourism market, we must also acknowledge the need to diversify our economy by welcoming new businesses and quality developers.

The GCEA's recommendations range from short-term improvements as we are seeing in the PPP program to mid- and long-term projects that include universal garbage collection, a tourism roadmap, establishing a Commonwealth Economic Development Authority, and institutional reforms on Rota, Tinian, and Saipan. The Council will be sharing these details and plans in the coming months.

There will be many challenges as we move forward that will certainly test our resilience once again. After battling two super typhoons, a pandemic, and a devastated economy, we realize more than ever that TOGETHER, WE CAN help our economy recover; TOGETHER, WE CAN transform our islands into world-class destinations; and TOGETHER, WE CAN provide a better quality of life for all of us.

For more information, visit the GCEA on Facebook and Instagram (@cnmigov.economy) or contact them at gceacnmi@gmail.com.

Disclaimer: This is a column expressing the opinion of the author and is not intended as a news release.

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Lawyer says Doyle ready to defend himself in court

By JUSTINE NAUTA
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A lawyer representing a Saipan physician who is being accused of excessively prescribing opioids and controlled substances said his client is ready to stand in court and defend himself against all accusations.

In a statement, attorney Steven Pixley, who is representing Dr. John Doyle, said the federal government's press release about the matter was aimed to "embarrass, defame, intimidate, and improperly sway public opinion against a good physician who refused to capitulate to the demands of the federal government."

Pixley said that Doyle is ready to stand up to the federal government, while he is prepared to defend Doyle in a court of law.

Pixley stated that Doyle has "worked tirelessly over the years to provide excellent medical services to his patients and the people of the CNMI," adding that Doyle has worked closely with the CNMI government to protect citizens against the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The evidence will show that the prescriptions in question were issued pursuant to a bona fide physician-patient relationship in the usual course of practice with a good faith belief that the prescriptions and his treatment plan served a legitimate medical purpose," Pixley said.

Separately, Doyle said in a statement that he did not give medicines for "non-legitimate purposes," that while he can't sue, he "can only take out his wallet" and try to defend himself.

The U.S. Attorney's Office for the Districts of Guam and the NMI has filed a civil lawsuit against Doyle for allegedly prescribing opioids and controlled substances 73 times. Doyle allegedly also issued other controlled substances to another patient, ignoring obvious signs of addiction and physical and mental health deterioration.

The U.S. Attorney's Office has asked the District Court for the NMI to order Doyle to pay civil penalties in the total amount of $4,936,771.

NMC TRAINING
CNMI Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services' Division of Fire Prevention and company commanders recently completed a training activity facilitated by Northern Marianas College's Community Development Institute. The training focused on report writing for law enforcement officials. In photo with the commanders and NMC-CDI staff are NMC interim president Frankie Eliptico and DFEMS Commissioner Dennis Mendiola.
NMC

TINIAN

From Page 1

and investors in the CNMI.

Specifically, Sablan's bill seeks to grant permanent residency status in the Marianas to persons that were admitted to the Commonwealth as a Commonwealth-Only Transitional Worker in fiscal year 2015 and subsequent fiscal years, beginning before the date of the enactment of the NMI U.S. Workforce Act of 2108 or Public Law 115-218 or persons that have resided in the NMI as an investor under the Commonwealth Immigration Law and or presently a resident classified as a CNMI-only nonimmigrant under the Immigration and Nationality Act.

These amendments are in conjunction with President Joseph R. Biden's new immigration reform bill called the "U.S. Citizenship Act of 2021" this month, which aims to provide an earned path to citizenship. One provision states that a lawful prospective immigrant could become eligible for permanent residence after at least five years of prospective status and that prospective applicants would need to have been in the United States before 2021.

The letter states that many CW-1 workers have been on Tinian for many years and are known as good people and valuable members of the community, have children who were born here, and some have married into local families. "We have found them to be good, honest, hardworking residents of our island and hope they will remain here as long as they wish," the letter said. "…It is wrong for them, their families, and their employers to wait, anxiously, for their papers to be renewed annually. ….Although the COVID-19 pandemic has set back our economy significantly, we will rebuild that economy and will need these loyal and faithful employees to support our regrowth, not just this year, but for the years to come. Your legislation will help relieve this problem."

The Tinian Chamber said these workers have suffered many hardships—Super Typhoon Yutu, the current pandemic, and the changing immigration laws and regulations of U.S. Citizenship Immigration System and the handling of labor laws by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security—that have left employees and business owners in constant stress.

"…The USCIS reduced the quota to 9,998 for [fiscal year] 2018, which devastated businesses in the Northern Mariana Islands. U.S. Congress had to intervene (Workforce Act of 2018) and increase the quota to 13,000 for FY 2019. …USCIS has continued to require the foreign employees to leave within 10 days like they were criminals if their work permits expire. Businesses must submit all their financial information and business licenses several times a year and of course it has to be submitted by regular mail, not at the website and no e-mail."

RELIEF

From Page 1

most notably through the stimulus check payments, funding for government operations, and additional funding for unemployment assistance.

In his remarks for the Congressional Record yesterday, Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) reflected on how important the American Rescue Plan and the five previous pandemic relief bills have been to the people of the CNMI.

Biden is expected to sign the relief bill on Friday (Saturday CNMI time).

Guam Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero and Lt. Gov. Josh Tenorio said the American Rescue Plan will not only provide direct relief to people and help jumpstart Guam's economic recovery but will save millions of lives.

Separately, Torres and Palacios said in a statement that, while the CNMI remains among the safest places in the United States from COVID-19 because of proactive planning and collaboration, "it remains very clear that our economy has not recovered to appropriate levels in order to sustain our government." They said they look forward to seeing Biden sign the legislation on Saturday and that they will work with Sablan and federal partners on the implementation.

In a statement his office sent to media, Sablan said the rescue plan will keep the CNMI healthy and economically sound as the Commonwealth makes its way forward.

He said those who remain laid off will continue to receive Pandemic Unemployment Assistance and Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation, as they have since the Congress passed the CARES Act last March.

Sablan said taxpayers will receive another economic impact payment, $1,400, and more dependent children and certain dependent adults will qualify for additional aid.

He said the K-12 schools, which have managed to reopen on a limited basis, will remain open because the Rescue Plan has $160 million to make sure teachers and staff can be paid. The Northern Marianas College and its students will also get the help needed to continue studies.

He said childcare providers, another critical small business, will get an assist to stay open, benefitting working parents who depend on these services.

He said working families will also see their Child Tax Credit increase. "And because we were able to amend the Rescue Plan to make Marianas' taxpayers eligible for the advance monthly payment of CTC, just like Americans nationwide, island parents will be getting that money when it is most useful: to meet the immediate needs of growing children," Sablan said.

The delegate said working families in the Marianas will also now, for the first time in 25 years, receive the Earned Income Tax Credit.

He said for those who still cannot work or whose incomes are insufficient, they have included $30 million to provide food assistance in the Marianas and funds for housing, so no one will lose the roof over their heads.

Sablan recognized the importance of the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund included in the Rescue Plan. He said this money was kept out of the relief measure that they enacted in December, in part because of criticism this was a "blue state bailout."

"Believe me, the Marianas is neither blue nor a state. We are simply a community of Americans, who have been crushed economically by this pandemic; and this fiscal aid to our state and municipal governments will fund police and other public servants employed, providing the services every community needs," Sablan said.

The delegate said that without the help of the federal government and the support of fellow Americans, the people of the Marianas would have suffered terribly this last year.

"Instead, we remain healthy. Our children are in school. And we are ready to build back better, once this pandemic is finally behind us," he added.

Guam's Leon Guerrero and Tenorio said in their statement they will work with Delegate Michael San Nicolas (D-GU), federal partners, and government agencies to ensure an efficient rollout of the Rescue Plan.

"President Biden's plan puts the needs of the people above all else—giving much needed relief to our front-liners and working people, accelerating our vaccine distribution program, and helping us to keep our schools open," Leon Guerrero said.

She said since the announcement of the Rescue Plan, their administration has advocated for Guam's inclusion in all programs as well as the ultimate passage of this bill.

"It's been a difficult year for us all, but to the people of Guam, help is on the way," the governor said.

APATANG

From Page 1

vid M. Apatang wants a full-blown but controlled celebration this year.

In line with this, Apatang is pushing for five consecutive evenings of activities at the Garapan Fishing Base and a full-day celebration on the Fourth of July, instead of the traditional nine-day festivities.

Apatang has asked COVID-19 Task Force chair Warren F. Villagomez and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. chief executive officer Esther L. Muna for approval and guidance on how to make this happen.

The Liberation Day festivity is traditionally held in the days leading up to the July 4 parade.

In his letter to Villagomez and Muña, the mayor is proposing to have the Fourth of July celebration end with a parade by mid-afternoon and then close with a spectacular fireworks show at 10pm.

Apatang said that, similar to past celebrations, crowd control has always been the biggest item on the agenda when planning and carrying out the Fourth of July Liberation Day Festival.

"Granting us the go-signal to have an on-the-ground celebration this year will require that we multiply our crowd control efforts by at least twofold to assure the safety of the public," he said.

The mayor said the 2020 celebration was a drastic scaled-down version of the ones the people have become accustomed to because of the pandemic that reared its head early last year.

Last year's celebration was held at the airport field in Dandan, with Tinian and Rota joining virtually.

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Last day to submit online PUA application is tomorrow

The CNMI Department of Labor is reminding the public that the last day to submit an online Pandemic Unemployment Assistance application is Saturday, March 13, 2021.

PUA claimants may choose to submit their paper applications on the final day of submission on Monday, March 15, 2021. On this date, all applicants, regardless of their last name spelling (A-Z), will be allowed to submit their paper applications from 7:30am to 4:30pm.

New claimants must submit their initial claim and corresponding weekly certifications in order to be considered for the PUA program no later than March 13, 2021.

Applicants who are continuing their weekly certifications and are still in the same status (furloughed/laid off/reduced hours) as they were in the first round of PUA (Feb. 2, 2020, to Dec. 26, 2020), should submit weekly certifications (Dec. 27, 2020, to March 13, 2021) for the second round of the PUA program. All applications received by the department will be reviewed and determined for eligibility of the PUA benefits.

The department is also announcing that additional PUA coordinators will be assigned to assist claimants with the adjudication process. In this regard, the number of PUA telephone lines will be reduced to allow more staff to focus on expediting PUA applications, assisting claimants, and administering the payments of the unemployment benefits. An announcement with the new telephone numbers will be made soon.

Additional updates

On Feb. 17, 2021, the CNMI Department of Labor was notified of the grant award from the U.S. Department of Labor, amounting to $184,800,000. Of this amount, $92,400,000 is for the PUA benefits and $92,400,000 is for the FPUC benefits. The department was also granted $210,000 to incorporate additional funding for Identity Verification of PUA claimants and to assist with efforts to prevent and detect fraud, identity theft and recover fraud overpayments in the PUA program. *Note that is a revised grant award by the U.S. Department of Labor from the previous announcement of $276,800,000.*

The CNMI Department of Labor is working in conjunction with the Department of Finance to issue PUA benefits to the thousands of eligible PUA claimants within the next few weeks. ***(PR)***

UCA to launch Project Liffang

The United Carolinians Association, in collaboration with the Carolinian Affairs Office and CNMI Women's Association, is launching Project Liffang on Saturday, March 20, from 8am to 2pm at the Carolinian Utt in Garapan.

Liffang is a Refaluwasch term that means "give away." In line with this philosophy, UCA is launching Project Liffang as a way of providing support to members of the community who are affected by the current COVID-19 crisis.

Project Liffang will gather interested individuals (through a signed agreement) who are willing to sell or share whatever items or goods they have at a nominal price. The benefit will be to the seller, who is hoping to make money to sustain their basic necessities, and supporting the buyer's ability to afford items, goods, or commodities at an affordable price. The project will also help people enhance their home-gardening and farming skills while also providing them the venue to market their home products.

For more information or to register as a vendor, contact the Carolinian Affairs Office at 234-6383 or CNMI Women's Association at 233-8978. ***(PR)***

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OSHA Region IX Updates
March 23-25:
Virtual Instructor Led Training (VILT) OSHA Courses
Course Topics Include (but are not limited to):
• Health Hazard Awareness
• Bloodborne Pathogens
• Pandemic Illness Preparedness
• Fall Hazard Awareness
For more information or to enroll, please visit:
http://pacificsafetyfest.com/
OSHA Training Institute Education Centers
OSHA Region 9
Arizona State University
California State University, Dominguez Hills
Chabot-Las Positas Community College District
University of California San Diego
Pacific Coast Safety Fest
OSHA Occupational Safety and Health Administration
The CNMI OSHA On-Site Consultation program, at the time of initial publication of this document, 02/2021, is funded by a cooperative agreement for $245,900 federal funds, which constitutes 100% of the program budget. 0% of $0 of the program budget, is financed through non-governmental sources.

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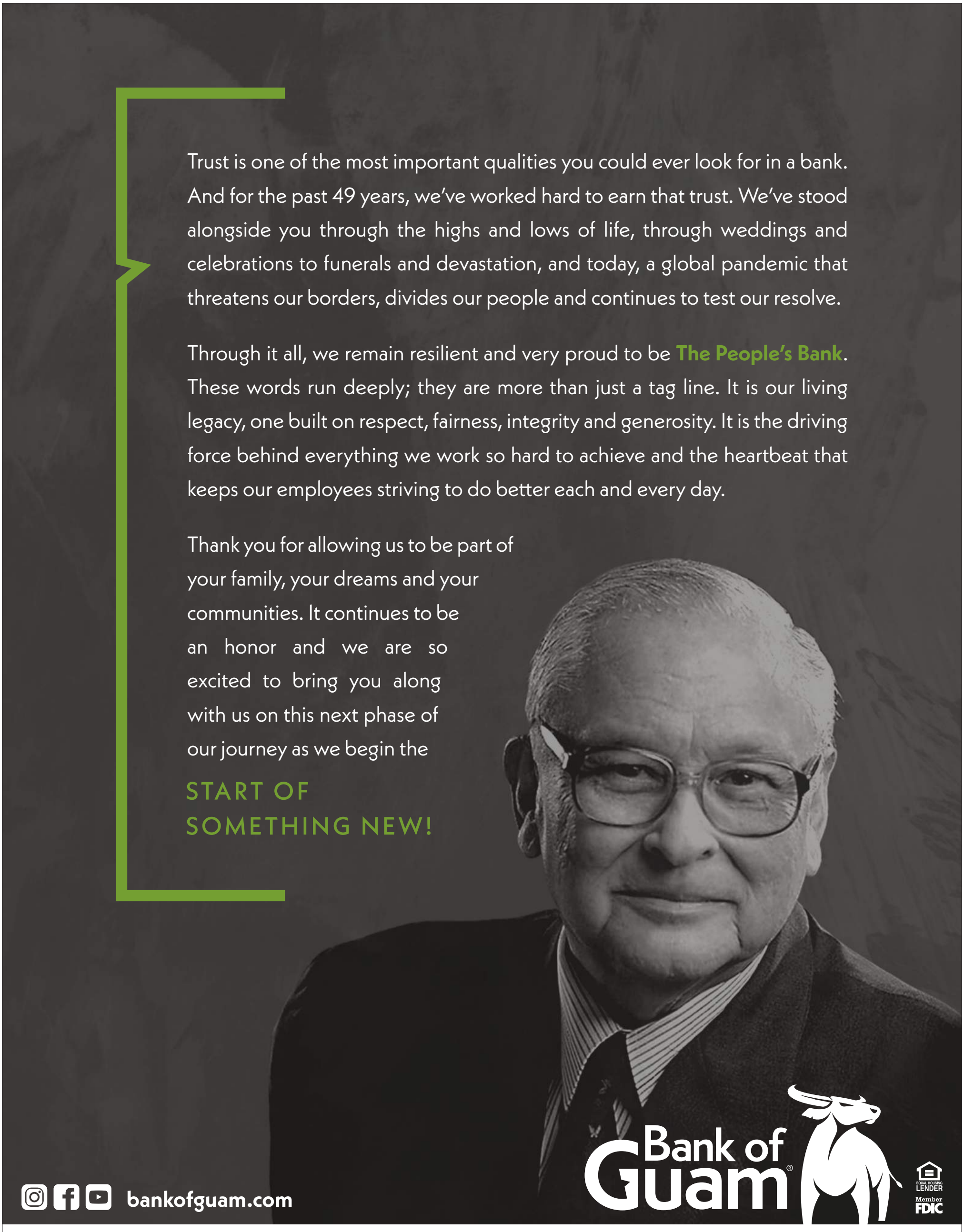

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- Email the Guam Benefits Office at: pctc.vbahon@va.gov
- Call the Guam Benefits Office and leave a message:(671) 489-3793

Include the following:
- Your email and phone number
- First and Last Name
- Reason for Contact

(For security reasons, DO NOT include your social security number in the email/phone call)

What happens next?

A Benefits Counselor will contact you within 2-hours of leaving a message.

If your message is received after 2:30pm, or on a holiday, or on a weekend, you will be notified the next business day of your scheduled interview date/time.

In all cases, a confirmation telephone call or email will be sent to the customer.

Appointment Days/Times: Monday through Friday, 8am to 3:30pm

Benefits Counselors will be available to address Non-Health Care related inquiries related to Compensation, Pension, Survivor Benefits, Claims, Appeals, Status Requests, Etc. and assistance with the claim process.

VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Manglona wants govt's annual expenditure capped at $190M

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Sen. Paul A. Manglona (Ind-Rota) has introduced a legislative initiative to amend a section of the CNMI Constitution to cap the government's annual expenditure at $190 million.

Manglona's Senate Legislative Initiative 22-06, which he prefiled last Monday, will create a Budget Stabilization Fund, also called a rainy day fund, where any surplus revenue collected shall be deposited.

» Legislative initiative will establish rainy day fund

The senator told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday that the CNMI government is right now facing an unprecedented fiscal and economic crisis—which he blames on uncontrolled government expenditures in the last five years and the drastic reduction in revenues due to the COVID-19 pandemic—hence the need to create a rainy day fund that the CNMI could dip into if the CNMI encounters similar a crisis in the future.

"We all know our government needs to do a major re-adjustment in the CNMI budget," Manglona pointed out.

In order to avoid repeating past mistakes and to put the government on a sustainable financial course, there must have effective financial control in place to reduce and eliminate operating deficit, and criminal penalties for budget over-expenditures, he said.

As outlined in Manglona's proposed legislative initiative, the $190-million budget cap shall not be increased in any future fiscal year except for a minimum 3% annual budget adjustment. Any surplus revenue shall be deposited into the Budget Stabilization Fund, to be appropriated only in times of unexpected revenue shortfall or budget deficit, requiring an affirmative vote of three-fourths of the numbers of each chamber in a joint session of the Legislature.

Manglona said there is a critical need to review the entire fiscal operations of the government to assess the financial impact of this pandemic on not only the fiscal year 2021 budget but also on the upcoming fiscal year 2022 budget plan. Ultimately, he said, the fiscal response policies that will be adopted by the Legislature will have to balance the current revenues with the current government expenses, including the plan to eliminate the accumulated deficit of the government.

He said that after the implementation of its fiscal response package addressing the present financial crisis, the total government expenditure from local resources for both fiscal years 2021 and 2022 will be significantly less than $190 million.

Under the legislative initiative, an annual adjustment of up to 3% for each budget year is permissible provided that no less than 80% of the total anticipated revenue over authorized annual expenditure are allocated and deposited into the Budget Stabilization Fund.

Legislative initiatives require an affirmative vote of three-fourths of the members of each chamber present and voting. If the measure passes the Legislature, it will then be put to a vote at the next election, so people can approve or reject it.

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Department of Community and Cultural Affairs
Office of the Secretary
Caller Box 10007, Saipan, Mariana Islands 96950
Tel. (670) 664-2587 • Fax (670) 664-257

CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT FUND (CCDF) PROGRAM
2021 SUMMER PROGRAM GRANT

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Program announces an opportunity for non-profit, community-based organizations to participate in a Summer Program Grant for Summer 2021. This grant is open to organizations that offer Summer Programs to all school-aged children between the ages 6 to 12 years old. For this grant, a total of six (6) awards will be provided, 4 awards for Saipan, 1 for Rota, and 1 for Tinian. CCDF has the right to award smaller grant awards as appropriate. CCDF Summer Program Grant Application Packets maybe picked up at the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Program Office, Building No. 1347 Ascension Court, Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950

Interested applicants should submit one (1) original and three (3) copies of the completed application and requirements, sealed and marked: CCDF Summer Program Grant Application 2021. Attention: Maribel Loste, CCDF Administrator.

All applications must be stamped received no later than April 15, 2020 4:00p.m. Incomplete applications will not be accepted and will be returned.

CCDF will only accept written inquiries regarding this grant opportunity and should be addressed to Maribel Loste, CCDF Administrator on or before 4:00p.m. on March 22, 2021. Inquires maybe sent via:

1. Hard copy and submitted to the CCDF Office Bldg. No. 1347 Ascension Court Capitol Hill or
2. Email at mloste.cnmiccdf@gmail.com with the subject: **CCDF 2021 Summer Program**

All inquiries made after March 22, 2021 will not be entertained.

/s/ Maribel Loste
CCDF Administrator

/s/ Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero
DCCA Secretary

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-21-020

Installation of Sludge Dewatering Equipment

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Installation of Sludge Dewatering Equipment in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The intent of the contract is for the Contractor to provide all labor, equipment, supplies and materials necessary to complete the scope of work which consists of; installation of sludge dewatering equipment including the screw press skid (OFCI) for full function. The work shall include; selective demolition of existing improvements, the installation of sludge dewatering units (OFCI), shaftless auger conveyor (OFCI), installation of pressure pumps, installation of water storage tanks, and rehabilitation and modification of existing improvements, along with other miscellaneous features, for one unit at Sadog Tasi Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and one unit at Agingan WWTP. The work shall be completed with minimal disruption to the daily operation of the Sadog Tasi WWTP and Agingan WWTP. CUC requires the Project to be completed in 180 calendar days from date of award of contract.

The project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval for project award from USEPA.

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, oeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of **$100.00** (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by site visits will be held on **March 9, 2021 at 10:00 AM** (ChST) at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) copies of the bid must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "CUC-IFB-21-020, Installation of Sludge Dewatering Equipment" to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on March 29, 2021, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before due date and time. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement this form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.

A Bid Guarantee of not less than fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the Unites States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General. A *Payment Bond* of one Hundred (100%) percent and a Performance Bond of one hundred (100%) of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract. Bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing no later than 10:00 a.m. (ChST) on March 16, 2021 to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Westen Knudsen, CUC Water/Wastewater Engineer via email address westen.knudsen@cucgov.org and to Marcela Tenorio, P&S, Senior Administrative Technician - marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

SABLAN, 12 OTHER LAWMAKERS TO US AG, ACTING SOLICITOR GENERAL

'Stop defending in court unconstitutional policy on SSI benefits'

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources, of which Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) is vice chairman, urged Attorney General Merrick Garland and acting Solicitor General Elizabeth Prelogar yesterday to stop defending in court the alleged unconstitutional policy of automatically stopping Supplemental Security Income benefits to Americans who move to certain U.S. territories.

Committee chair Raul M. Grijalva (D-Arizona) and Sablan, along with 11 other members, informed Garland and Prelogar in a letter that they are working with the Biden-Harris administration for a possible legislative fix.

The lawmakers said the SSI program is a critical lifeline for vulnerable, low-income Americans who are aged, blind, or disabled and rely on SSI to provide them with a basic income and avoid extreme poverty. Today, more than 8 million U.S. citizens receive SSI benefits of up to $783 a month, they said.

Sablan

"Yet, should any of these Americans move to certain U.S. territories, their SSI benefits automatically stop, even as the personal financial challenges they face due to age or disability do not," the lawmakers said. They said this is not just wrong, but also unconstitutional.

The lawmakers pointed out that multiple federal courts have stepped in over the last several years to rule that arbitrarily excluding U.S. citizens who live in the territories from being able to participate in national federal benefits program is unconstitutional.

They cited the *U.S. v. Vaello Madero* case in which the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit unanimously upheld a district court's decision that rejected attempts by the U.S. to collect $28,081 in SSI benefits that it had paid to Jose Luis Vaello Madero after he moved from New York to Puerto Rico. The Court of Appeals held that the denial of these benefits based solely on Madero's residence in Puerto Rico would violate his constitutional guarantee to equal protection of the laws.

The lawmakers also cited, among other cases, the *Schaller v. U.S. Social Security Administration* in which a federal district court judge in Guam similarly ruled that denyomg SSI benefits to a disabled woman in Guam while providing SSI benefits to her similarly disabled twin in Pennsylvania violates the U.S. Constitution's guarantee of equal protection.

They said that on March 1, 2021, the Supreme Court said it will review the Madero case, meaning that the U.S. Department of Justice will have to decide soon how it will proceed on these issues before the high court.

The lawmakers said DOJ's position has been to seek reversal in each of these cases, arguing that the unanimous view of the six federal judges that have ruled in these cases is wrong.

They said while they recognize it is DOJ's role to defend federal statutes, the offensive and illogical arguments DOJ has made to justify the second-class treatment of U.S. citizens living in the territories highlight why it would be appropriate for DOJ to stop defending this ongoing discrimination, which harms U.S. citizens in Puerto Rico and other territories every day.

The lawmakers said that none of these DOJ's arguments explain why residents of different territories can be treated differently for purposes of national benefits programs.

They cited an example that residents of the CNMI are eligible to receive SSI and residents of Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands are eligible for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, while residents of other territories are arbitrarily denied these benefits.

"That is not to say that Congress does not have broad powers with respect to the territories; we do. But Congress does not have the power to treat residents of the territories arbitrarily when it is acting as a national legislature to enact national social safety net programs," they said.

WUSHIN DONATION CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Wushin Corp. donates 20 sacks of rice to Karidat Social Services as the company's way of helping the community, especially those who have been adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

2021 Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month

Get Involved & Be Part of The Change

"Training & Technical Support for Families of Children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing in the CNMI"

TINIAN: MARCH 13 2021
JC CAFE 8:00 AM - 2:30 PM

TIME	Presentation
08:00 AM - 08:30 AM	*Registration*
08:30 AM - 08:35 AM	*Welcoming Remarks* John Cabrera, *Program Aide, NMPASI*
08:35 AM - 09:35 AM	*Promoting Health for Children and Youth with Developmental Disabilities* Rachael Haynes, DNP -PNP-PC, *Commonwealth HealthCare Corporation, Children's Clinic*
09:35 AM - 09:45 AM	*Tinian/ Rota: Commonwealth Office of Transit Authority Updates* Saipan: Break
09:45 AM - 10:20 AM	*Basic American Sign Language for Beginners* Dr. Kiriko Takahashi, *Center on Disability Studies University of Hawaii*
10:20 AM - 10:45 AM	*Individualized Family Service Plan 101* Robin Palacios, MA. Sp Ed., *Director, Early Intervention Program*
10:45 AM - 11:00 AM	*Individualized Education Plan 101* Donna M. Flores, M.S., *Director, Special Education Program*
11:00 AM - 12:00 PM	*Lunch Break*

SAIPAN: MARCH 20, 2021
HYATT REGENCY 8:00 AM - 2:30 PM

ROTA: MARCH 27, 2021
AS PARIS 8:00 AM - 2:30 PM

TIME	Presentation
12:00 PM - 12:20 PM	*Helpful Apps for Individuals who are Deaf & Hard of Hearing & Their Families* Carla D. Coldeen, M.Ed., ATP, *Service Provider and Owner, Assistive Technology Professional & Consulting Services*
12:20 PM - 01:20 PM	*Parenting Strategies* Coach Tai D. Doram, *Certified Cognitive Behavior Consultant, Behavior Specialist, CNMI Public School System*
01:20 PM - 01:30 PM	*Energizer*
01:30 PM - 01:50 PM	*Testimonials from the Deaf/ Hard of Hearing Community*
01:50 PM - 02:00 PM	*Services for Deaf/ Hard of Hearing Community* Tiava To'omata/ Samuel Santos, *Planner/ Pre-ETS Coordinator, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation*
02:00 PM - 02:10 PM	*Programs & Services* *Frances A. Torres, Federal Program Coordinator, Workforce Investment Agency*
02:10 PM - 02:30 PM	*CIRCLES* *Congresswoman Leila Staffler*
	Closing Remarks

Seating is Limited! Registration forms are available at NMPASIF or
more information please contact John Cabrera at (670) 235-7273/4 or email jcabrera@nmpasi.org

"This program was supported by a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services awarded to the Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation (CHCC), and sub-granted by the CHCC. Points of view or opinions contained within this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S Department of Health and Human Services, or CHCC."

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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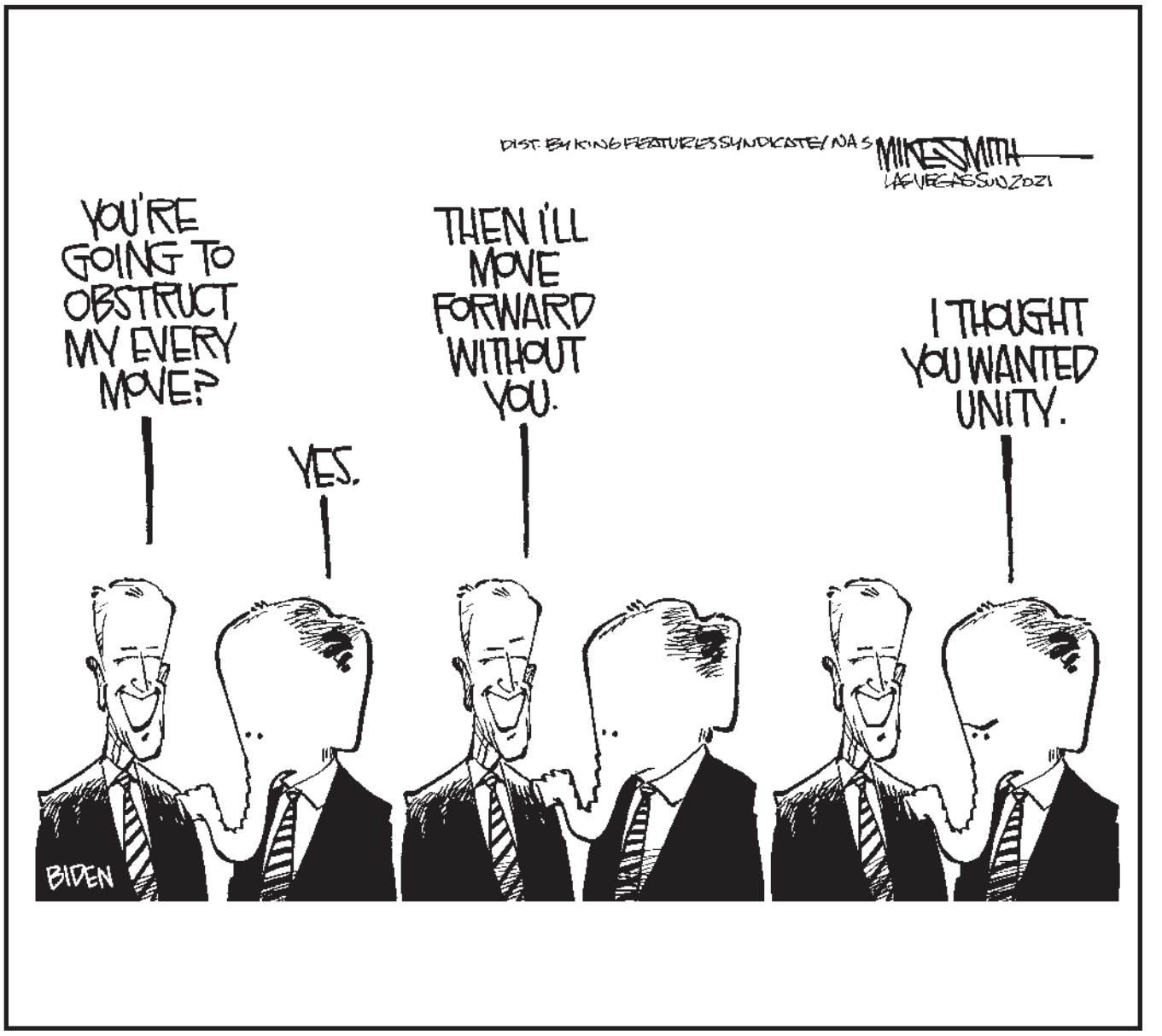
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MIKE SMITH
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YOU'RE GOING TO OBSTRUCT MY EVERY MOVE?
YES.
THEN I'LL MOVE FORWARD WITHOUT YOU.
I THOUGHT YOU WANTED UNITY.
BIDEN

EDITORIAL

Will George Floyd get justice in the courts?

George Floyd became an unwitting symbol of the systemic problem of police brutality in May, when he was callously killed by a Minnesota cop, who knelt on his neck for nearly 10 minutes, a ruthless act caught on video for all the world to see. Calls for police reform and for justice—not only for Floyd, but all the other Black men who have lost their lives through encounters with law enforcement—ensued over the summer in cities across the country. Floyd's death also reinvigorated legislative reform efforts in Congress and states like Maryland, which is on the cusp of strengthening accountability measures for police. Not everyone believes reform legislation pending in the Maryland General Assembly goes far enough, but it is far better than what is currently on the books.

Now, in another test of just how much Black lives matter in this country, trial is set to begin for the former police officer, who less than a year ago, glanced around casually as Floyd—pinned beneath the officer—called for his mother and begged for his life. Derek Chauvin faces charges of second-degree unintentional murder and second-degree manslaughter, with potential for a third-degree murder charge still under consideration.

Yet, for all the emotions stirred up in so many people by the video of the encounter with Floyd, the fate of Chauvin, who has pleaded not guilty, will be decided by a jury of his peers and not public sentiment. History has shown us juries don't always rule on the side of justice for the victim in these cases.

We have seen too many times how police officers have walked away with no legal culpability despite damning evidence against them. Like when a Kentucky grand jury brought no charges against Louisville police last year for the killing of Breonna Taylor, who was shot multiple times during an investigation of her boyfriend. In Maryland, two years after 19-year-old Anton Black died in Greensboro of sudden cardiac death after three police officers held him down, his estate filed a federal lawsuit in December alleging excessive force and a cover-up. No officers were ever prosecuted in the case.

In 2015, an Ohio grand jury refused to indict Timothy Loehmann and Frank Garmback, the Cleveland police officers involved in the fatal shooting of 12-year-old Tamir Rice as he played in a park. Then there's Freddie Gray in Baltimore; Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri; and Eric Garner of New York City. All died at the hands of police. No one was held accountable in court.

In George Floyd's case, Chauvin's attorneys have already signaled in court documents that they will argue Floyd died from a drug overdose; the medical examiner found fentanyl in his system. It is also believed they will bring up information about Floyd's underlying health conditions. Prosecutors don't have to prove that Chauvin intended to kill Floyd, but whether his actions caused his death. For a conviction of second-degree unintentional murder, they will have to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Floyd died because Chauvin assaulted him. A second-degree manslaughter conviction will require prosecutors to show beyond a reasonable doubt that Chauvin was negligent in putting his knee on Floyd's neck

See GEORGE on Next Page

Losing grace

By JIM RAYPHAND
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Jim Rayphand is executive director of the Northern Marianas Protection and Advocacy Systems Inc.

There is hardly anything more jarring than a fall-from-grace story and certainly no shortage of real-life anecdotes playing out sometimes in public display with a bloodthirsty media (social or otherwise) circling then feasting like sharks on a whale fall—at times a slow, majestic descent and other times swift and crushing like a car crash evoking teary sadness and awe for onlookers resisting but unable to look away. There are no winners in these stories.

The tragedy lies in the shadows, the grey between black and white or the stuff hiding in plain sight. We see it, but pretend we don't until the slippery slope crumbles. In literature, "Tragedy depicts the downfall of a noble hero or heroine, usually through some combination of hubris, fate, and the will of the gods." The tragic hero's untenable wish to attain his earthly desires "inevitably encounters limits, usually those of human frailty (flaws in reason, hubris, society), the gods (through oracles, prophets, fate), or nature" (E. Davis). We know too with some certainty that, "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall" (Proverbs 16:18). "Nothing is secret that will not be revealed, nor *anything* hidden that will not be known and come to light" (Luke 8:17). Try as we may, we cannot avoid our own karma.

Aristotle recognizes this element of individual, human flaw as the primary reason for mistakes causing one to fall. He asserts further that in so doing one will undergo a change in fortune or achieve some revelation about human fate, destiny, and the will of the gods. He "quite nicely terms this sort of recognition as a change from ignorance to awareness of a bond of love or hate" (E. Davis).

Grace, by definition, is "simple elegance" or "courteous goodwill." In action, it's "bringing honor to someone or something simply by one's presence." If you're fortunate in life, you will have known people who, by their very presence, make you feel like a better person, pure of heart with sincere intentions, and, if you're extraordinarily fortunate, you will only know those people in the light of grace—no fall, not even a stumble—just perfect, unadulterated grace. Alas, true grace is rare and there is no grace without truth thus the pain of tremendous loss on the occasion of losing it.

I have long conceded, despite my many undeserved blessings, that mine is a life riddled with absolute flaw. Try though I may, lapses in judgment are inescapable, if not inevitable and I can't blame anyone but myself. Still, I'd be lying to say I feel regret for my sweetest mistake of all—my cross to bear. All things come to an end, but "I would rather have had one breath of her hair and one touch of her hand than eternity without it. And, when [the angels of death] ask what I liked the best [in this life], I'll tell them it was [her]." (City of Angels) Come what may.

Redemption comes in many forms and mine rests in people with grace, the children I am blessed to call my own and the numerous individuals with disabilities I've been able to help even if only a little. In this life, I've come to know that *with great privilege, comes great responsibility* and though we stumble and are often blinded by selfish desires, there is a confident expectation of something better to come through a life of service to others.

For Advocates at the Northern Marianas Protection & Advocacy Systems, Inc., our mandate to protect the civil, legal, and human rights of people with disabilities is both a great privilege and great responsibility. Whether it's offering voice to those who can't speak for themselves, simply being a friend to those in mental/emotional crisis or charging through barriers of unwanted discrimination, we get as much as we give.

A little-known rule of three says that whatever energy we put into the world, be it positive or negative, will be returned threefold. I like to believe it's a way for those who left us in this life to let us know they are either proud or disappointed in us—lest we forget they were here with eyes full of grace.

For more information about disability advocacy or other disability-related issues, feel free to call the NMPASI Office at (670) 235-7273/4 [voice] / 235-7275 [fax] or contact us on-line via www.nmpasi.org.

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Zombies, cicadas and UFOs: There's nothing we can't handle after this year of COVID-19

By TRICIA BISHOP
The Baltimore Sun

Tricia Bishop is The Baltimore Sun*'s opinion editor. Email: tbishop@baltsun.com.*

They're not locusts, but they might as well be. Billions of beady-eyed cicadas digging their way out of the soil in 15 Eastern states this spring—after 17 years of creepily tunneling around underground—definitely feels like a biblical-type plague on the horizon. A plague on top of the plague we're already in, that is.

The insects aren't even the only thing we have to worry about emerging from the ground after this long, bleak pandemic winter of our discontent. The walking dead are also making a comeback this year, or so we're told. Nostradamus, that 16th century French astrologer who made predictions in poem form for fun, prophesied a zombie apocalypse in 2021, according to those who are in the know about this sort of thing (aka: internet posters).

That explains why the Zombie Preparedness guide developed by the Centers for Disease Control is making the rounds again online. Yes, you read that right—"again." It turns out there's been a Zombie Preparedness page on the CDC site since at least 2011.

But while the self-described "tongue-in-cheek campaign" (which includes such helpful advice as "pick a meeting place for your family to regroup in case zombies invade your home") got some attention when it debuted a decade ago, its time is clearly right now.

Whether it's murder hornets, mask mandates, pantless office meetings (until Jeffrey Toobin ruined that) or hundreds of people storming the Capitol on a belief that Satan-worshipping pedophiles were undermining Donald Trump's presidency, there has never been a more surreal year in modern American history.

Since the first COVID-19 lockdowns one year ago, we have been hit with one unbelievable scenario after another. We don't even flinch at news of the weird, anymore.

Swarms of insects are set to invade the outdoors, you say? The one place where it's solidly safe to socialize? Of course they are! Actual locusts have been wreaking havoc in some African countries, destroying crops and livelihoods for months now. Crunching cicadas beneath your feet is nothing compared to that.

Shuttered schools? Yawn.

Ballpark seats populated with cardboard cutouts? Shrug.

Donning plastic face shields and hazmat suits to take a flight? Yeah, yeah.

Capacity limits at Target? People brawling over toilet paper? Virtual funerals, weddings and divorces? Monoliths appearing and disappearing in scenic locales? The Pentagon releasing video footage of UFOs? A "firenado" in California? Mystery seeds mailed from China? The return of the "Christmas star" after nearly 800 years?

Been there, done that.

In the past year, we've weathered targeted attacks on the U.S. mail and our democratic election system; watched a white Minneapolis police slowly choke the life out of a Black man on video; seen our U.S. Capitol overtaken by face-painted conspiracy theorists; and, most tragically, endured the COVID deaths of more than half a million people in this country and five times that number worldwide.

What's a zombie apocalypse after all that?

This past 52 weeks has toughened us. We don't scare as easily anymore, nor are we as shocked or rattled by small things. We've been through big things, and we now know we can roll with a lot more than we ever though possible.

We've collectively become more resilient over the past year, even in the face of death, adapting to survive and occasionally even thrive. Take the Kenyan startup (aptly named The Bug Picture) that began harvesting the swarming locusts as protein rich farm feed. Or the thousands who took to the streets to protest police brutality and secure real reforms in state legislatures. Or the first person to come up with the coronavirus pinata. Or the restaurants that turned their parking lots into fresh food markets. Or the rainbow makers who splashed colors in their windows to brighten the view for others.

It's been a year unlike any other. Getting to today, with three vaccines in circulation and case counts falling, is an achievement. Take a moment to remember that. Then plan your zombie evacuation route. If the past year has taught us anything, it's that you never know what's possible.

Why it's harder to change culture than nature

By JOHN L. JACKSON JR.
Los Angeles Times

John L. Jackson Jr., an anthropologist and filmmaker, is dean of the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania.

One reason for our relentless "culture wars" and anxieties about "cancel culture" might be our misguided sense of what culture is—and how easily we can change it.

We used to frame everything in terms of "nature versus nurture." Either something was hard-wired and biological—such as intelligence or athletic ability—or it was cultural. The implications were always pretty clear: If anything isn't natural, it must be merely cultural.

If something was mappable in our genes or identifiable with multicolored brain scans, it was deemed real and difficult to change. Maybe even impossible. And moral arguments weren't too far behind. If God designed things a certain way, how dare we tamper with them?

Of course, much of our thinking about human life has long pivoted on the search for biological answers to social questions. From gene splicing to mRNA vaccines, we have gotten better and better at deciphering some of nature's most complex secrets to suit our goals.

Operation Warp Speed is a large-scale example of just how efficient we've become at bending biology and science to fit our needs: in this instance, creating a vaccine in record-breaking time as we attempt to beat back a global pandemic. However, that very same pandemic shows us how much less effective we are at the cultural side of the ledger.

Just because science was able to tee up a vaccine faster than ever before doesn't mean that we are anywhere near as adept at dealing with the intractably cultural reasons why so many people are skeptical about taking it. The same skepticism seems to have caused five governors to roll back their states' mask mandates, despite urgent warnings from public health officials.

What science makes possible, cultural impulses can overturn. We see this in conspiracy theories likening the vaccine to a global Trojan horse, a concerted effort to harm the entire world's population while pretending to heal it. (And that is not even the most bizarre conspiracy theory getting debunked or defended on cable news programs these days.)

Some talk about Americans' obstinate mask rejection as the politicization of science—which is justifiable given that there is a clear blue-red checkerboard pattern to it. But we shouldn't allow that fact to obscure a more fundamental one: Politics is just a version of culture's decidedly unwieldy dynamics.

If culture is, as anthropologists like me describe it, everything that we have to learn while living together in the world, what counts as "culture" is stunningly ubiquitous and undeniably comprehensive.

When I want students to think about the inescapability of culture, I usually start by asking them to tell me what is not culture, what they didn't have to learn how to do or use or love or believe in. They usually come up with answers such as breathing and going to the bathroom—though even the latter is complicated by the rules we internalize from society about how, where, when and with whom we can go, especially in public. (Think of the controversies over which public restrooms transgender people should use.)

As we continue to improve our mastery of nature, it's very often at the expense of appreciating the harder nut to crack that cultural practices and beliefs represent. We look for laws of culture, but they aren't nearly as easy to identify or rely on as the laws of science. For instance, it is arguably more difficult to figure out how to thwart the destructive urges of angry citizens hell-bent on storming the Capitol and attacking the body politic than it is to devise amazingly efficient ways to stop microbes from invading our physical bodies.

Why does that matter? And what can we do about it? First, we need to recognize that there is nothing mere about culture. Not at all. In the nature-versus-nurture debates we will continue to have in the 21st century, it is nature that will increasingly seem more predictably receptive to our demands, ever more susceptible to our scientific breakthroughs. In the future, we could start to think of things as merely biological.

Even with something like climate change, the science of how to tackle it seems fairly clear. It's our cultural commitment that's lacking. So while we may get better at predicting, measuring and potentially counteracting natural events, culture will continue to confound us.

We should not keep making the mistake of believing that science can solve our most pressing social dilemmas. There isn't a pill we can pop to eliminate cultural conflicts. And if there were, we would be wise not to take it. The better treatment is a lifelong willingness to listen to and learn from other people in ways that might help to humble the worst forms of hubris about our own cultural claims.

Culture changes slowly, often unpredictably. While so-called cancel culture might pounce on people in an instant, our continuing wars over cultural ideals and beliefs are much more like drawn-out, self-destructive battles of mutual attrition. And if we continue to wage them as we do, all of us could actually lose.

GEORGE

From Page 10

and that his actions caused the man's death. Three other officers involved in Floyd's arrest have been charged with aiding and abetting second-degree murder and aiding and abetting second-degree manslaughter, and are scheduled for trial later this year.

The video seems pretty clear-cut. Floyd complains that he can't breathe and begs several times for Chauvin to allow him air, but he is ignored until he lay still on the ground. Floyd was later declared dead at a local hospital. How could anyone not think Chauvin played a role after seeing the graphic video? But video doesn't necessarily provide a sure shot at conviction, especially when it comes to a judicial system that too often gives police the benefit of the doubt in brutality cases.

Protests against police violence have already begun in Minneapolis and beyond, including in Baltimore over the weekend, as Chauvin's trial begins. We can only hope their efforts to decry police abuse are met with a just verdict. Law enforcement need to hear the message loud and clear from the courts that excessive force will not be tolerated, and those who indulge in it will face the consequences.

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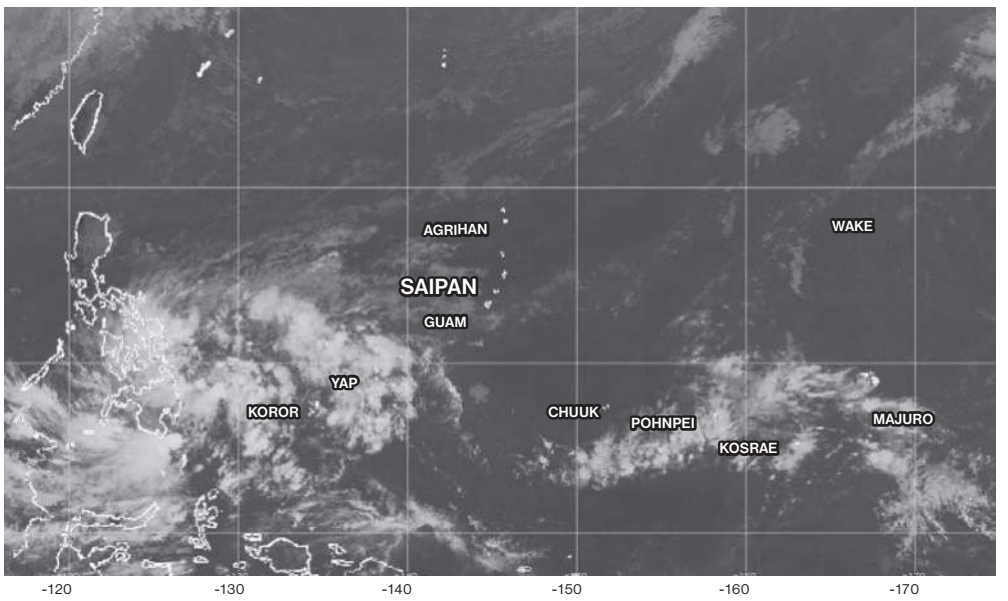
The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated light showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.
87º 77º	86º 76º	86º 76º	87º 77º	87º 77º

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 5:38 AM, THURSDAY, MARCH 11, 2021

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A weak but persistent shear line is keeping skies mostly cloudy over Guam, but Rota, Tinian and Saipan remain partly cloudy. Moderate to fresh trades persist across the region, with 5 to 7 ft seas at the buoys.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	84 | 76 °F
Palau	Mostly Cloudy	86 | 77 °F
Yap	Mostly Cloudy	80 | 71 °F
Chuuk	Mostly Cloudy	82 | 79 °F
Pohnpei	Overcast	82 | 78 °F
Kosrae	Cloudy	84 | 80 °F
Majuro	Rain	84 | 79 °F

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:27 AM	6:26 PM
Saturday	6:26 AM	6:26 PM
Sunday	6:25 AM	6:27 PM
Monday	6:24 AM	6:27 PM
Tuesday	6:24 AM	6:27 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	5:41 AM	5:31 PM	-
Saturday	6:21 AM	6:21 PM	-
Sunday	6:58 AM	7:10 PM	-
Monday	7:34 AM	7:57 PM	-
Tuesday	8:09 AM	8:44 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Overcast	72 | 64 °F
Beijing	Clear	56 | 31 °F
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	72 | 67 °F
Honolulu	Clear	82 | 68 °F
London	Light Rain	54 | 42 °F
Los Angeles	Clear	81 | 57 °F
Manila	Partly Cloudy	89 | 76 °F
Melbourne	Clear	79 | 60 °F
Miami	Clear	81 | 68 °F
New York	Clear	34 | 31 °F
Osaka	Mostly Cloudy	56 | 39 °F
Paris	Partly Cloudy	62 | 44 °F
Pusan	Clear	65 | 38 °F
Rome	Partly Cloudy	59 | 40 °F
Salem	Mostly Cloudy	58 | 45 °F
San Francisco	Clear	69 | 49 °F
Seoul	Haze	55 | 28 °F
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	53 | 42 °F
Washington, DC	Mostly Cloudy	42 | 25 °F

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
12:28 AM	High Tide	-0.24
7:29 AM	Low Tide	1.75
1:09 PM	High Tide	0.92
6:10 PM	Low Tide	1.71

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
- ❏ Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
- ❏ Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- ❏ Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- ❏ Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MARCH 5, 2021

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	6:55am	7:35am	1, 5, 6
UA117	7:00am	7:40am	4

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	6:55am	9:50pm	1, 5 via Guam

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	1, 3, 5

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	5:10am	5:51am	1, 5, 6
UA174	5:15am	5:56am	4

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/174	10:55pm	5:56am+1	3 via Guam
UA184/174	10:40pm	5:51am+1	5 via Guam

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	5
UA184	10:55pm	4:45am+1	1, 3

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 9, 2021

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sat
1303	3:30PM	4:00PM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sun

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sat
3103	4:30PM	5:00PM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sun

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1205	11:00	11:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily
1212	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2105	11:30	11:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

Bill wants to require banks to give OAG 'suspicious activity' report

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Sen. Edith E. Deleon Guerrero (D-Saipan) has introduced a bill that will require CNMI banks to give the Office of the Attorney General a copy of the Suspicious Activity Report that banks send to the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, or FinCen, of the U.S. Department of Treasury.

Deleon Guerrero told *Saipan Tribune* Wednesday this is important not only as a broad suspicious financial activity monitoring tool for the CNMI but it also provides a positive business environment for investors considering the Commonwealth for their business portfolio growth and diversification.

Right now, banks in the CNMI are not required to send the Suspicious Activity Report, or SAR, to any law enforcement agency in the CNMI, yet the CNMI needs to be apprised of such suspicious acts, she said.

Under federal law, banks must submit the SAR to FinCen for suspected insider abuse involving any amount, violations aggregating $5,000 or more where a suspect can be identified, violations totaling $25,000 or more regardless of potential suspects, and transactions totaling $5,000 or more that involve potential money laundering or violate the Bank Secrecy Act. A provision in the Code of Federal Regulations also requires the bank to file the SAR with the appropriate federal law enforcement agencies and the Department of the Treasury.

Under Deleon Guerrero's proposed bill, the Office of the Attorney General shall keep and maintain the SAR confidential in accordance with CFR and may use the SAR in performing its law enforcement duties.

MCS continues to improve safety operations

Mount Carmel School is working closely with the COVID-19 Task Force and the CNMI Public School System to continuously invest and improve mitigation materials and supplies. As MCS nears its fourth quarter, MCS continues to prioritize safety efforts while providing high-quality education through the current four-day face-to-face class schedule.

MCS started off the school year with a hybrid approach where students met face-to-face on specific days and assigned cohorts met online for virtual learning. Near the school's second quarter, MCS progressed to a full face-to-face learning schedule while following COVID-19 safety measures. All employees medically eligible to take the COVID-19 vaccine have completed both doses as an added safety measure for their families and the school community.

Prior to the start of the 2020-2021 school year, the school installed a variety of safety materials including floor markers, plexiglass, dividers, washbasins, and UVC lighting fixtures in classrooms. Frequent sanitization and physical social distancing are also implemented throughout the day and denied access to places that would create possible congregations such as playgrounds and the school's cafeteria.

Earlier this month, MCS launched its annual Early Bird Special, which offers major registration and tuition discounts for families until May 1, 2021.

"Through these are tough and challenging times MCS has only grown stronger, we will continue to adapt to the current situation by upholding the safety measures provided by the COVID-19 task force," said school president Dr. Galvin Deleon Guerrero. "New safety measures are being looked into to finish off the school year and prepare for the upcoming SY 2021-2022." MCS principal Frances Taimanao assured that, despite the many obstacles MCS has faced since last year and up until now, providing a high-level education is what MCS is for "but safety is the key role in doing so. We want to ensure all of our students, as well as faculty, remain healthy all while keeping the current year in motion."

Procedures for student drop off and pick up remain intact and followed to prevent congregation and maintaining safe social distancing. To learn more about the safety procedures taken at MCS visit the school's website at www.mountcarmelsaipan.com. ***(PR)***

MHS DONATION

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Saipan Teen Unity Leos Club donated sanitary items to Marianas High School last Wednesday, March 10, 2021. The group donated paper towels, tissues, and hand sanitizers for the school. This service was led by Saipan Teen Unity Leos Club president Victoria Ancheta, Saipan Unity Lions Club president Alicia Barbo, and FVDG Lion Atoy Banting. The donation was received by MHS principal Jonathan Aguon, vice principals Melanie Rdiall and Romolo Orsini, and assigned ZC Lion Eden Mercado

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP21-CHCC/AOC-COVID-19-001

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: MARCH 20, 2021 TIME:10:00AM (CHST)

"CHCC VACCINATION CALL CENTER"

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWLOAD THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE [WWW.CHCC.GOV.MP]. ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS** TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

THE CHCC RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSAL AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTIONS IN ANY PROPOSAL, IF TO DO SO SHALL BE IN THE INTEREST OF THE CHCC. ALL PROPOSALS SHALL BECOME THE EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OF THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION.

/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORAZON P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

ESTATE OF JOSE CONCEPCION SABLAN, Deceased.) CIVIL ACTION NO. 98-0329) ORDER SETTING MOTION HEARING

Petitioner's Motion to Reopen Probate filed February 13, 2021 is set for a **Motion hearing on THURSDAY, April 15, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. before Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho**. All parties are ordered to appear.

Opposition, if any, shall be due on or before March 31, 2021. Reply, if any, shall be due on or before April 13, 2021.

Petitioner shall serve all the heirs listed on the Decree of Final Distribution and shall file a proof of service.

Due to the length of time since the Probate Action has been closed, Counsel or Petitioner shall also publish in the newspaper per the probate rules.

IT IS SO ORDERED this 23rd day of February, 2021.

/s/_____
Joseph N. Camacho, Associate Judge

Robert Tenorio Torres
Attorney at Law
Plata Drive, Whispering Palms (Chalan Kiya)
P.O. Box 503758, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 234-7859 | Fax. (670) 234-5749
Attorney for Petitioner Merced M. Tomokane for Claimant Bank of Guam

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF: DAVID PALACIOS, Decedent.) Civil Action No. 20-0248) NOTICE OF HEARING ONPETITION FOR LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION) Date: April 1, 2021) Time: 10:00am) Judge: Joseph N. Camacho

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Petitioner, Merced M. Tomokane for Creditor Bank of Guam, of Saipan, CNMI ("Petitioner"), has petitioned the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands for Letter of Administration of the Estate of David Palacios, Decedent.

The hearing on the Petition for Letters of Administration by Merced M. Tomokane, as Petitioner for Creditor Bank of Guam, is scheduled to be heard on **April 1, 2021 at 10:00 a.m.**, at the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, *Guma' Hustisia*, Civic Center, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. All interested persons or any potential or unknown heirs of the Estate should appear at this hearing.

Dated this 21st day of January, 2021.

/s/_____
Clerk of Court/Deputy Clerk

DIVISION OF COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

P. O. Box 501304, Saipan MP 96950 | Gualo Rai Center, Saipan
TEL. NO. 664-8300 | FAX NO. 664-8315
www.dcrm.gov.mp

NOTICE OF APPLICATION

As of March 12, 2021

THE FOLLOWING IS A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF COASTAL PERMIT APPLICATIONS RECEIVED BY THE DCRM OFFICE:

APPLICANT	DATE APPLICATION RECEIVED	APPLICATION PROJECT DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	TYPE	STATUS
1. Commonwealth Utilities Corporation	02/17/2021 SW-2021-019	S5 Sewer Lift Station Renovation	Garapan, Saipan	Wetland	Approved* 03/10/2021
2. Pacific Coastal Research & Planning	02/16/2021 SLR-2021-020	F/V Lady Carolina Removal	Saipan Lagoon	Lagoon & Reef	Approved* 02/26/2021
3. Isa Villas Partners, LLC	02/26/2021 SMS-2017-X-111-A1	Isa Villas Phase II	Capitol Hill, Saipan	Major Siting	Certified Complete 03/11/2021
4. Erick Van Der Maas	02/25/2021 SPlm-2021-021	Drydock	Lower Base, Saipan	Drydock	Approved* 03/05/2021
5. Saipan Golden Bridge Services Corporation dba West Coast Restaurant	03/02/2021 SS-2021-022	Outdoor Dining Area	Susupe, Saipan	Shoreline	Under Review*

NMIAC §15-10-210 of the CRM Rules and Regulations requires all permit applications to be published in a newspaper for general circulation within the CNMI within 15 days of receipt of application. The list reflects recently received permit applications and those with a recent change in status. New applications are marked with an asterisk (*).

The Public is invited to submit written comments regarding any of the above projects for which a permit decision has not been issued. All permit comments should identify the project by application number. Your comments should be mailed or hand-delivered to the DCRM Office. All persons who desire a public hearing regarding any project may do so by submitting a written request for a public hearing to the DCRM Office within fourteen (14) days for minor permits (APCs) and proposed amended major sitings. Public Hearings are required for all new major siting projects. All public hearing notices are published in a local newspaper of general circulation. Residents of Rota and Tinian may submit comments and hearing requests to their local DCRM Coordinator. Persons wishing to retain the right to appeal a DCRM Permit decision must file a notice of appeal with the DCRM office within thirty (30) days of the issuance of the DCRM permit decision as provided in Part 200 § 15-10-235 of the DCRM Regulations.

Business

Mariana Lighthouse soft opening today

By BEA CABRERA
beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

BEA CABRERA

After almost a year of renovation and waiting for the perfect time to open amidst the pandemic, the Mariana Lighthouse chose today for its soft opening.

One night last week, many people saw a hint of what the new Mariana Lighthouse Saipan on Navy Hill will look like when the bright lights around it were being tested. Today, the community will get the chance to experience the full glory of the renovated lighthouse when it opens its doors for a soft opening.

According to Bibong Corp. financial controller John Park, guests should expect three outlets open—the café, restaurant and pub, and the barbecue patio for dinner.

"So whatever they feel like eating or drinking, people have options, relax and enjoy the visit… They should expect a great scenery, simple but meaningful food and drinks, collect memories and for those who knew and saw the lighthouse before the renovations, get ready to be surprised," he said.

"Of all the attractions originally planned for the Mariana Lighthouse, the only thing missing for now is the 'Wish Lock' area at the second floor," he added.

The café is open from 10am to 9pm and is adorned by Zen-wall bricks, visible pipes, dark and neutrals colors, and space and freedom to have that conversation with a friend over coffee, close a deal during business meeting, or a place to catch up on your reading. People can expect a relaxed atmosphere. Specialty drinks awaits: carbonated ade with syrup or fresh fruit drinks, parfait, and fresh tea. They also have sea salt latte which can give a little different taste from the ordinary specialty coffees.

The restaurant is located in the middle allowing light natural through the big windows and open for brunch and lunch from 10am to 2pm. At brunch, they serve salmon benedict, seared scallops, and jamon croqueta. For lunch, savor their potato & shrimp, port & chicken skewers, don katsu, local favorite loco moco, chicken sliders. and pasta dishes in bolognese and carbonara. For dinner, gambas al ajillo, buffalo wings, dakgangjeong (Korean food), potato & shrimp, fried okra, 4-cheese pizza, pepperoni pizza, french fries, strawberry waldorf salad, and focaccia are on the menu.

From 5pm to 12am, the restaurant opens its pub and enjoy cocktails, your favorite whiskey or wine.

For barbecue dinner that starts at 5:30pm to 9:30pm at the patio outside of the lighthouse and they have beef finger, baby ribs, sausages, corn, and onion.

"We have already completed hiring people for now and we are confident that we have hired the right people to join the Mariana Lighthouse team. However, we still need to operate to see if there are any deficiencies in terms of manpower and that is the primary reason for doing soft opening before the grand opening," Park said.

"We have been receiving a lot of inquiries and reservation, but we have decided not to take any reservation for the first week of the soft opening since we need to observe how many people are coming and how we are handling them. We probably need to work on it and try various approaches to see which one is most suitable for our business, so the first week might seem to be a little unorganized and unprofessional, but we believe it is unavoidable in order to improve," he added.

Park said that they plan to soft open for two weeks in preparation for the Mariana Lighthouse grand opening on March 26. "We have cleaned and fixed the lighthouse that has long been abandoned. We know that everyone is going through hard time due to the COVID-19 pandemic and we are hoping that this place can be a one of the place on the island where you can come, hang out, and get healing vibes. Please come and enjoy the scenery, food, and drinks."

"Prior to opening, our executives had a mixture of emotions. We are getting anxious at some moments, but getting excited when things work out. When you start something new, it always happens. You don't feel like you are ready until it starts and so we ask the community to come and enjoy the scenery, food, drinks, and see Saipan's iconic lighthouse come to life once again," Park added.

For more inquires, call (670) 322-3353 of go to FaceBook "Mariana Lighthouse Saipan."

Bank of Guam marks 49th year with 'day of giving'

HAGATNA, Guam—Living its founder's vision to bring prosperity and goodness to island communities, Bank of Guam is commemorating its 49th anniversary with its employees joining together to organize community clean-ups and projects in Guam and throughout its branch network.

According to Joaquin P.L.G. Cook, the bank's president and chief executive officer, "As we launch 49 years of being the People's Bank and look toward the future, 2021 presents us with so many opportunities. This year's plans provide a meaningful way for all of us to participate in our community—by connecting with each other, our neighbors and our precious environment."

Cook continued, "We will be visiting four unique villages in Guam, all with different needs but with a singular purpose to drive impactful change. Here are our plans.

- Date: March 13 (Bank of Guam Founder's Day)
- Time: 3:30pm show, 4pm go until 6pm
- Zones/Villages: Yigo, Dededo, TATUHA, and Malesso

Our teams in the CNMI, neighboring islands, and San Francisco will also be spreading the Bank of Guam spirit on this single day. It's one we won't soon forget!"

Cook stated, "The Founder's Day of Giving Planning Committee has been working hard to make this one day series of events successful, and our community participation caps off a great day of unity with each other, our neighbors and our environment. But most importantly, it begins a series of Founder's Days of Giving not only for that day, but throughout the year as we approach our landmark 50th Anniversary next year. As our Golden Anniversary approaches, Bank of Guam's impact will be purposeful and heartfelt." ***(PR)***

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT
AUDIT MANAGER

EXAMINATION NO. OPA-21-001
Opening Date: 1/14/21 Closing Date: March 19, 2021

For more information, please visit our website at www.opacnmi.com or come visit us at our office in Capitol Hill. Interested persons may also pick up a copy of the Examination Announcement at the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) in Garapan.

Office of the Public Auditor
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Website: http://opacnmi.com
Address: 1236 Yap Drive, Capital Hill, Saipan, MP 96950
Mailing Address: PO Box 501399, Saipan MP 96950
Email: mail@opacnmi.com
Phone: (670) 322-6481 Fax: (670) 322-7812

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Civil Engineer: Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering (maybe foreign educational equivalent).

In charge of cost estimation and project supervision as well as documentations required such as Reports, Shop Drawings, Submittals, RFIs, Variation/Change Orders, Billings, Close-out and Coordination with project stakeholders.

36-months experience as Civil Engineer.

Send resume to:
RJCL Corporation, dba RNV Construction
Attn: **Human Resources,**
P.O. Box 504974, Saipan, MP 96950

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
Main Office: FRANCISCO C. ADA/SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
P.O. BOX 501055, SAIPAN MP 96950-1055
Phone: (670) 237-6500/1 • Fax (670) 234-5962
Website: www.cnmiports.com

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS
FOR
SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR CNMI AIRPORTS
PROJECT NO. CPA-SA-001-21

The Commonwealth Ports Authority's (CPA) is a public corporation and autonomous agency of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). In accordance with its Procurement Rules and Regulations, CPA hereby seeks the services of qualified consulting firms to provide professional services for a CNMI-wide Airport Safety Management System (SMS) Implementation Program, Project No. CPA-SA-001-21 (AIP Pending).

The project is being funded by the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration and CPA. These services are in accordance with CPA's Procurement Rules and Regulations and procedures shall be in full compliance with Section 40-50-202: Architect-Engineer Design and Construction Management Services.

The Request for Qualification (RFQ) Package is available at CPA's Administration Office, 2nd floor of the arrival terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport. No fee is required for obtaining the proposal package. Electronic copies may be made available upon request to Ms. Wendi L. Prater, CPA's Executive Assistant/Project Manager.

Questions regarding this request for qualification statements shall be submitted in writing to the CPA Administration Office or emailed to Ms. Prater at wprater@cnmiports.com or cpa.engr@pticom.com by no later than 5:00 p.m. (CHST), Friday, March 19, 2021.

The statements of professional qualification will be evaluated based on the criteria available in the RFQ package.

Interested Consultants are requested to submit one (1) original, four (4) copies and one (1) electronic version in .pdf of their statements of professional qualifications no later than **5:00 p.m., TUESDAY, MARCH 29, 2021.** Statements of qualification must be presented by a combination of both brochures and the use of current U.S. Government Standard Form 330.

The CPA reserves the right to reject any or all statements of professional qualification for any reason, if in its sole opinion to do so would be in its best interest.

/s/ CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO Date: February 24, 2021
Executive Director

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
Main Office: FRANCISCO C. ADA/SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
P.O. BOX 501055, SAIPAN MP 96950-1055
Phone: (670) 237-6500/1 • Fax (670) 234-5962
Website: www.cnmiports.com

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS
FOR
PAVEMENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM PROGRAM FOR CNMI AIRPORTS
PROJECT NO. CPA-SA-002-21

The Commonwealth Ports Authority's (CPA) is a public corporation and autonomous agency of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). In accordance with its Procurement Rules and Regulations, CPA hereby seeks the services of qualified consulting firms to provide professional services for a CNMI-wide Airport Pavement Management System (PMP) Program, Project No. CPA-SA-002-21 (AIP Pending).

The project is being funded by the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration and CPA. These services are in accordance with CPA's Procurement Rules and Regulations and procedures shall be in full compliance with Section 40-50-202: Architect-Engineer Design and Construction Management Services.

The Request for Qualification (RFQ) Package is available at CPA's Administration Office, 2nd floor of the arrival terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport. No fee is required for obtaining the proposal package. Electronic copies may be made available upon request to Ms. Wendi L. Prater, CPA's Executive Assistant/Project Manager.

Questions regarding this request for qualification statements shall be submitted in writing to the CPA Administration Office or emailed to Ms. Prater at wprater@cnmiports.com or cpa.engr@pticom.com by no later than 5:00 p.m. (CHST), Monday, March 22, 2021.

The statements of professional qualification will be evaluated based on the criteria available in the RFQ package.

Interested Consultants are requested to submit one (1) original, four (4) copies and one (1) electronic version in .pdf of their statements of professional qualifications no later than **5:00 p.m., WEDNESDAY, MARCH 31, 2021.** Statements of qualification must be presented by a combination of both brochures and the use of current U.S. Government Standard Form 330.

The CPA reserves the right to reject any or all statements of professional qualification for any reason, if in its sole opinion to do so would be in its best interest.

/s/ CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO Date: February 24, 2021
Executive Director

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF: REED CAMACHO Deceased, JULIE TOKYO CAMACHO, Petitioner.) CIVIL ACTION NO. 21-0080

NOTICE OF HEARING PETITION FOR LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION

NOTICE is hereby given that a Petition for Letters of Administration seeking appointment of JULIE TOKYO CAMACHO as the Administrator of the Estate of REED CAMACHO (Deceased), was filed in the above-entitled Court. A hearing has been set for the above-entitled matter and will be held in Courtroom of the Commonwealth Superior Court, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands at 10:00 a.m. on the 15th day of April, 2021.

All persons having any objection to the petition, or having claims against the Estate or against the deceased, should file their claims with the Clerk of Court of the Commonwealth of the Superior Court within sixty (60) days after the first publication of this notice.

DATED this 10th day of March, 2021.

/s/ Clerk of Court

Nation

Jury selection resumes as Chauvin faces possible new charge

AP
In this image taken from video, defense attorney Eric Nelson, left, and defendant former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin listen as Hennepin County Judge Peter Cahill presides over jury selection, Wednesday, March 10, 2021, at the Hennepin County Courthouse in Minneapolis, Minn., in the trial of Chauvin, who is accused in the May 25, 2020, death of George Floyd.

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—Potential jurors in Derek Chauvin's murder trial return Thursday to continue a selection process moving more quickly than expected. Meanwhile, the former policeman charged in George Floyd's death faced the prospect of an additional third-degree murder charge.

Five jurors have been seated after just two days of screening by attorneys and Judge Peter Cahill, who had set aside at least three weeks to fill the panel.

Cahill was expected to start Thursday's proceeding by discussing next steps in the state's effort to add a third-degree murder charge. Cahill rejected the charge twice before an appellate ruling in an unrelated case provided new grounds for it right before the trial began. On Wednesday, the state's Supreme Court rejected Chauvin's effort to block the charge.

Attorneys have given considerable attention to the jury pool's attitudes toward police in the first two days of questioning, trying to determine whether they're more inclined to believe testimony from law enforcement over evidence from other witnesses to the fatal confrontation.

The first juror picked Wednesday, a man who works in sales management and grew up in a mostly white part of central Minnesota, acknowledged saying on his written questionnaire that he had a "very favorable" opinion of the Black Lives Matter movement and a "somewhat unfavorable" impression of the Blue Lives Matter countermovement in favor of police, yet "somewhat agreed" that police don't get the respect they deserve. He said he agrees that there are bad police officers.

"Are there good ones? Yes. So I don't think it's right to completely blame the entire organization," he told the court under questioning from prosecutor Steve Schleicher.

He also said he would be more inclined to believe an officer over the word of another witness. But he said he could set aside any ideas about the inherent honesty of an officer and evaluate each witness on their own.

The second, a man who works in information technology security, marked "strongly agree" on a question about whether he believes police in his community make him feel safe. His community wasn't specified—jurors are being drawn from all over Hennepin County, which includes Minneapolis and many of its suburbs.

"In my community, I think when there is suspicious activity the police will stop by, they will ask a question," he said. "I think that sense of community is all we want right? We want to live in a community where we feel safe regardless of race, color and gender."

Schleicher noted that the man also stated in his questionnaire that he strongly disagreed with the concept of "defunding" the police, which has become a political flashpoint locally and across the country in the wake of Floyd's death.

"While I necessarily might not agree with the police action in some situation, I believe that in order for police to make my community safe they have to have the money," he replied.

The questionnaire explores potential jurors' familiarity with the case and their own contacts with police. Their answers have not been made public, and the jurors' identities are being kept secret. Their r acial backgrounds often aren't disclosed in open court.

Floyd was declared dead on May 25 after Chauvin, who is white, pressed his knee against the Black man's neck for about nine minutes. Floyd's death sparked sometimes violent protests in Minneapolis and beyond, leading to a nationwide reckoning on race.

Chauvin and three other officers were fired. The others face an August trial on aiding and abetting charges. The defense hasn't said whether Chauvin will testify in his own defense.

Schleicher used a peremptory challenge Wednesday to remove from the panel a woman who has a nephew who's a sheriff's deputy in western Minnesota. She said she was dismayed by the violence that followed Floyd's death.

"I personally didn't see any usefulness to it," she said. "I didn't see anything accomplished by it, except I suppose bring attention to the frustrations of the people involved. But did I see anything useful coming out of the burning of Lake Street and that sort of thing? I did not."

The dispute over the third-degree murder charge in Chauvin's case revolves around the conviction of another former Minneapolis police officer in the unrelated killing of an Australian woman. The appeals court affirmed Mohamed Noor's third-degree murder conviction in the 2017 shooting death of Justine Ruszczyk Damond.

COVID bill gives states a pathway to reduce maternal deaths

WASHINGTON (AP)—Labor and delivery are thought of as the riskiest times for new mothers, but many women die in the weeks and months after giving birth. Now a provision in the COVID-19 relief bill could help change that.

The legislation gives states the option of extending Medicaid coverage to women with low to modest incomes for a full year after childbirth. States are currently required to provide 60 days of coverage, but medical experts point to research showing that women can die from pregnancy-related conditions up to a year after giving birth, and that 3 in 5 of all such deaths are preventable.

The maternal health provisions would make it easier for states to cover new mothers for a full year by cutting the time and paperwork needed to obtain approval from Washington under Medicaid, as well as the Children's Health Insurance Program. Maternal health advisory groups in 19 states, from Texas to Massachusetts, and Washington to Tennessee, have recommended such an extension. Last year a bipartisan bill to do so cleared the House but failed to advance in the Senate.

The legislation has been shepherded by Rep. Robin Kelly, D-Ill., who serves on the House committee that oversees Medicaid, the federal-state program covering about 1 in 5 Americans, from many newborns, to low-income adults and frail nursing home residents. Kelly explained that a constituent brought the problem to her attention several years ago.

"I never realized that maternal mortality was such a big issue in this country," said Kelly, who represents Chicago.

It's particularly serious for Black women, whose pregnancy-related death rate is three times that of white women. "For Black women, it cuts across socio-economic levels," said Kelly, who is Black. "It's a health equity issue."

A congressional commission known as MACPAC, which advises lawmakers on Medicaid policy, is recommending that Congress go beyond what's in the legislation. The commission recently voted to urge lawmakers that a full year of coverage be standard in every state, and that the federal government pay the entire cost.

Report: Cuomo groped female aide in governor's residence

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP)—An aide to New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo says he groped her in the governor's residence, a newspaper reported Wednesday, in the most serious allegation made yet by a series of women against the embattled Democrat.

The Times Union of Albany reported that the woman, who it did not name, was alone with Cuomo late last year when he closed the door, reached under her shirt and fondled her. The newspaper's reporting is based on an unidentified source with direct knowledge of the woman's accusation. The governor had summoned her to the Executive Mansion in Albany, saying he needed help with his cellphone, the newspaper reported.

"I have never done anything like this," Cuomo said through a spokesperson Wednesday evening.

"The details of this report are gut-wrenching," Cuomo said, adding that he would not speak to the specifics of this or any other allegation, given an ongoing investigation overseen by the state attorney general.

The three-term governor faces harassment allegations from several other women and increasingly urgent calls for his resignation or impeachment from at least some fellow Democrats. Cuomo has repeatedly said he won't resign.

"He's openly said he will not resign. And with further mounting allegations that are deeply credible, we are in a position now where I think we should impeach," said Assembly member Jessica González-Rojas, a Democrat who had previously pushed for his resignation.

The woman whose account was reported by the Times Union said Cuomo had touched her and made flirtatious comments on multiple occasions. According to the newspaper, her allegations came to light as Cuomo staffers watched the governor's March 3 news conference, his first after a new round of sexual harassment claims made in late February.

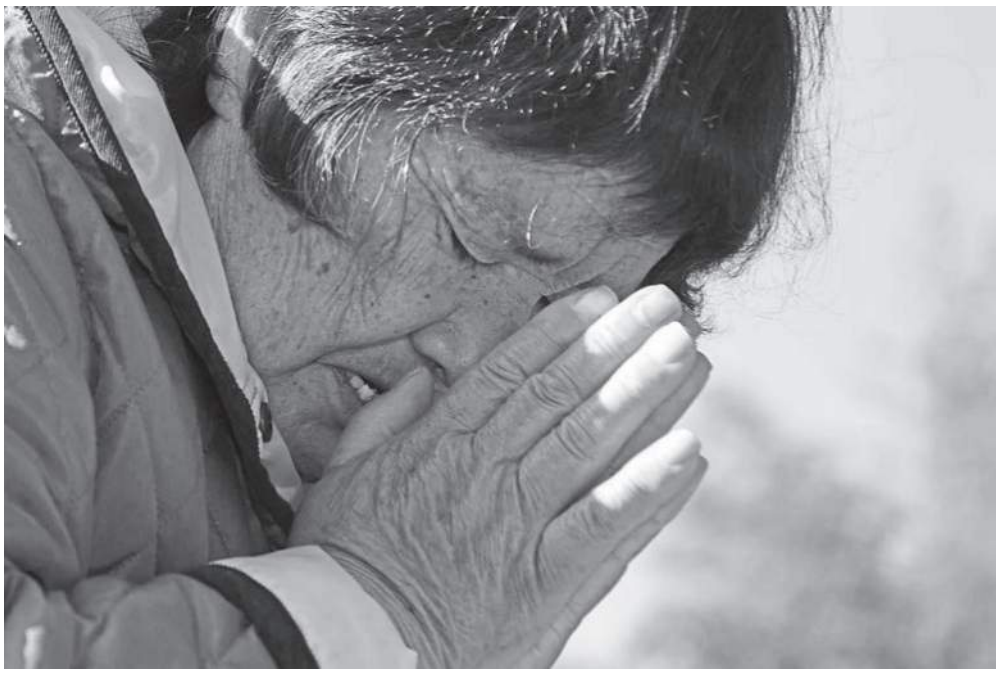
In it, he denied ever touching a woman inappropriately. The aide subsequently became emotional, and told a female supervisor who approached her about her encounters with the governor. At least one supervisor reported the allegation to an attorney in the governor's office Monday, the newspaper reported.

Prior to Wednesday's report, the allegations against Cuomo include a combination of claims that he made the workplace an uncomfortable place for young women, ranging from flirtatious comments to a nonconsensual kiss.

At least five accusers—Charlotte Bennett, Lindsey Boylan, Ana Liss, Karen Hinton and the latest accuser—worked for the governor in Albany or during his time in President Bill Clinton's Cabinet. Another, Anna Ruch, told The New York Times that she met Cuomo at a friend's wedding.

Bennett's attorney, Debra Katz, said in a statement released Wednesday evening that the latest allegations are "eerily similar" to the former aide's own story.

Asia



A woman who lost her husband and grandchild in the 2011 earthquake and tsunami, prays in front of the grave in Miyako, Iwate prefecture, Japan Thursday, March 11, 2021. AP

Japan marks 10th year of disaster

TOKYO (AP)—Japan is marking the 10th anniversary Thursday of the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disaster that hit the northeastern region, where many survivors' lives are still on hold.

People, some carrying bouquets, walked to the coast or graves to pray for relatives and friends washed away by the tsunami. Emperor Naruhito and Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga were among those observing a moment of silence at 2:46 p.m.—the minute the shaking started—and were to speak at the memorial service later.

The magnitude 9.0 quake that struck on March 11, 2011, was one of the biggest temblors on record and set off a massive tsunami that swept far inland, destroying towns and causing meltdowns at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant. More than 18,000 people died, mostly in the tsunami, and nearly half a million people were displaced.

Ten years later, more than 40,000 people are still unable to return home, most of them from Fukushima, where areas near the wrecked plant are still off-limits due to radioactive contamination.

Roads, train lines, and other key infrastructure and housing have mostly been completed at the cost of more than 30 trillion yen ($280 billion), but land remains empty in coastal towns further north in Miyagi and Iwate prefectures, where existing population losses were accelerated by the disaster.

In Otsuchi town in the Iwate prefecture, where the tsunami destroyed its town hall, killing about 40 employees, their families in dark suits gathered at an empty land where the town hall used to stand. In Ishinomaki, Miyagi prefecture, dozens of residents prayed at a cenotaph carrying the names of more than 3,000 victims in town.

No deaths have been confirmed directly from the radiation, but Fukushima has fallen behind in the recovery efforts because of the radiation impact, with 2.4% of the prefectural land still no-go zones near the Fukushima Daiichi plant. The decommissioning of its melted reactors is an unprecedented challenge, with some questioning after 10 years of work whether it can be done at all.

Thursday's ceremony will be the last national commemoration for the 2011 disaster organized by the government. It comes just two weeks before the Olympic torch run begins from Fukushima ahead of the delayed Tokyo Summer Games in July.

Suga has said the Olympics will showcase Japan's recovery from the disaster and will be proof of human victory against the coronavirus pandemic, but some disaster survivors say their recovery is still only half done.

Rest of the country also marked the day to raise awareness for disaster prevention. In Kyoto, western Japan, authorities conducted emergency drills.

Myanmar police raid housing for striking railway workers

MANDALAY, Myanmar (AP)—Myanmar security forces on Wednesday raided a neighborhood in the country's largest city that houses state railway workers who have gone on strike to protest last month's military coup.

Police sealed off the Mingalar Taung Nyunt neighborhood in Yangon where the Ma Hlwa Kone train station and housing for railway workers are located. Photos and video on social media showed officers blocking streets and what was said to be people escaping.

At least three arrests were reported, but couldn't immediately be confirmed. There was no apparent resistance to the raid, and local media reported that the authorities forced at least some residents from their homes.

Later Wednesday, police fired warning shots, tear gas, stun grenades and live rounds in other areas of Yangon to disperse protesters. In North Okkalapa, press and social media reports said at least 200 people were arrested. About 400 young people who were detained in mass arrests a week ago are believed to still be behind bars.

Also, the U.N. Security Council unanimously called for a reversal of the military coup, strongly condemning the violence against peaceful protesters and calling for "utmost restraint" by the military. The call was made in a presidential statement, which is a step below a resolution but becomes part of the official record of the U.N.'s most powerful body.

Diplomats said earlier drafts of the statement were stronger but drew objections from permanent council members China and Russia as well as from Myanmar's neighbor India, and from Vietnam, which is part of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations along with Myanmar.

The raid on rail workers comes just days after several Myanmar unions, including the Myanmar Railway Worker's Union Federation, issued a joint call for a nationwide work stoppage. They said the strike would be part of a broader effort for "the full, extended shutdown of the Myanmar economy."

World

Western Balkan nations to tighten COVID rules

BELGRADE, Serbia (AP)—Struggling with surging COVID-19 infections, several Balkan countries said on Wednesday that they would step up restrictions in hopes of easing the pressure on their overburdened health systems.

Doctors in Bosnia's capital of Sarajevo warned that infections have "exploded" in recent days and urged people to comply with pandemic regulations. Illustrating the rise in infections, long queues of people waiting to see doctors formed outside COVID-19 wards and outpatient clinics in the city.

On a positive note, the first AstraZeneca vaccine doses donated by neighboring Serbia, were administered in Sarajevo on Wednesday.

Bosnian authorities said that all bars, restaurants and non-essential shops in the Sarajevo canton will be shut during this weekend.

More than 1,000 new infections and 37 deaths over the past 24 hours were reported on Wednesday.

"These are hard days, and once again we appeal to citizens to be maximally vigilant and to take care so they can help us to keep the health system stable," said Ismet Gavrankapetanovic, head of the Sarajevo General Hospital.

In Serbia, Prime Minister Ana Brnabic said the government-appointed virus crisis body most likely will meet on Thursday to decide on tighter measures for the upcoming weekend.

The country of 7 million has given more than 1,5 million people at least one dose from an array of vaccines including China's Sinopharm, Pfizer-BioNTech, Russia's Sputnik V, and Astra-Zeneca, placing Serbia among countries with the highest vaccination rates in Europe. Nonetheless, Serbia is reporting more than 4,000 new infections daily and doctors have described the situation as alarming.

The government has launched a campaign to encourage people who have not yet been inoculated to do so. Experts have blamed the recent surge on flouting of the rules, and the fact that ski resorts remained open throughout the winter season.

Brnabic also criticized the holding in the past days of two concerts by a popular band at a Belgrade hall, saying authorities will ban all concerts in the future. Brnabic insisted that "we will demand that the organizers be punished."

In neighboring Montenegro, health authorities said schools will shift to remote instruction, while daycare centers, bars and fitness centers will close as part additional measures imposed by the small nation of 620,000.

Montenegro has had among the highest infection and death rates in Europe with more than 80,000 infections and over 1,000 deaths. Authorities said on Wednesday that if the situation worsens they may ask the European Union to send in medical staff to help.

Montenegro's health officials said that so far, approximately 70% of hospital beds in the small Adriatic state are occupied because of the virus outbreak.

In North Macedonia, a nationwide, two-week curfew will take effect on Wednesday from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m.

Authorities in the Balkan country of 2.1 million recorded last week a 60% increase in infections over the previous week. Most of the newly-admitted patients carry the the U.K. variant.

Venezuelan children pick through garbage for food, valuables

BARQUISIMETO, Venezuela (AP)—For some children in Venezuela, garbage is the main source of their livelihood.

This has been the case for several generations of garbage collectors in Venezuela, among them Ronaikel Brito, 16, who, like his mother when she was a child, and before her, her grandmother, looks for something of value every day in a landfill on an arid plain about five hours west of the capital, Caracas. But their work has never been so challenging: The nation's acute economic crisis coupled with stay-at-home orders prompted by the coronavirus pandemic have reduced trash output, making valuable findings rare.

"The reality today is that you don't get as many things as before," Ronaikel told The Associated Press at the landfill in Pavia, outside the city of Barquisimeto.

"I go searching to see what I get, but I get almost nothing," he added, noting that in recent months the children and adults who sift through garbage are spending more time trying to find objects they can sell or food in good enough condition to eat or feed horses, goats or pigs.

Waste has been drastically reduced during the pandemic, particularly food from homes, restaurants and wholesale markets. That was trash was coveted by garbage pickers in Barquisimeto, once a thriving agro-industrial city where food waste was notable.

Annually, about 14% of the world's food ends up in the garbage, even before it reaches the market, according to figures from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. In Venezuela, in addition to the large amounts of food, tons of aluminum containers and clothing were thrown away. Furniture, stoves and refrigerators ended up in the trash, too, because it was cheaper to buy new things than to repair them.

Now, extremely high costs push people to reconsider what they throw away.

Venezuela is mired in a deep political, social and economic crisis, which many critics attribute to two decades of socialist governments that have left the once-rich oil country bankrupt. The country is also in its sixth year in recession, and its residents are dealing with soaring food prices set in dollars, low wages and four-digit inflation, condemning millions to live in poverty.

The crisis has forced almost five million people to leave Venezuela in recent years in search of better living conditions. But for many who stayed—adults and children alike—rummaging through garbage in search of food scraps or valuable items has become an increasingly common activity.

Due to the contraction of the economy and the difficulties of leaving the country due to the pandemic, there are more people who under "other circumstances would have left," said Henkel García, director of the Econometric consulting firm.

Longtime garbage pickers are finding "equal or less" usable garbage because more people are competing for it, García said. He added that in about eight years, only about a quarter of the consumption that Venezuela had in 2013 and 2014 may remain.

Off The Wall

Woman impaled by tree limb has 7 broken ribs, husband says

PORTLAND, Maine (AP)—A Maine passenger who was impaled when a falling pine tree struck the vehicle she was riding in suffered seven broken ribs, but she's getting better day by day, her husband said Friday.

Theresa Roy, 79, has a long recovery ahead, said her husband, David Roy. But he said he's just happy they're alive after the bizarre incident that destroyed their vehicle and injured both of them.

"I feel like we had a guardian angel," he said.

David Roy, 78, said he and his wife were driving home to Oakland on a two-lane road because their vehicle had been buffeted by strong winds earlier on I-95 during a powerful wind storm.

The crash in Sidney happened in an instant when a pine tree blown down by high wind struck his vehicle as he drove at 50 mph (80 kph), with limbs crashing through the windshield as he struggled to control the vehicle. A large limb came through the center dashboard and windshield at an angle, hitting him and then striking his wife's armpit while another broke the windshield and impaled her shoulder, he said.

Sidney Fire and Rescue used the jaws of life to reach Theresa Roy and then cut the tree limb with a hand saw so she could be taken to MaineGeneral hospital in Augusta. She remained in fair condition on Friday at the hospital, a spokesperson said.

Roy said he has been moved by the outpouring of support, and he's glad that his scrappy wife is improving.

"She is one step at a time—doing good, getting better," he said.

The storm wreaked havoc across the region, knocking out power to more than 130,000 homes and businesses in New England and New York. A gust of 71 mph (114 kph) was recorded in Maine.

First whooping crane hatched at Wisconsin foundation dies

BARABOO, Wis. (AP)—The first whooping crane hatched at the International Crane Foundation in Wisconsin has died.

In this photo provided by the International Crane Foundation, shows Gee Whiz, the first whooping crane hatched at the International Crane Foundation in Baraboo, Wis. AP

Foundation officials said the crane, named Gee Whiz, died on Feb. 24 of natural causes. He was 38 years and nine months old. A whooping crane's average life expectancy in captivity is about 25 years. The oldest crane in captivity died at age 46, according to the foundation.

Gee Whiz was conceived through artificial insemination using semen from the U.S. Geological Survey's Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Maryland. He was named after George Gee, who worked at Patuxent and collected the semen.

Gee Whiz sired 178 cranes and was known for his nasty disposition. Officials with the foundation, which is located in Baraboo, said he was fiercely territorial and that workers dreaded handling him because he pecked their ankles and fingers.

Foundation spokeswoman Pamela Seelman described him as "spirited and tenacious."

Whooping cranes are still working their way back from the brink of extinction. The population has grown from fewer than 20 birds in the mid-1940s to almost 850 birds today, according to the foundation.

Amtrak worker accused of stealing 77 chain saws

NEWARK, N.J. (AP)—A longtime Amtrak employee in New Jersey stole several dozen chain saws and hundreds of parts from the railroad and sold them online, according to a federal criminal complaint released Tuesday.

Jose Rodriguez sold the items for more than $50,000 between 2016 and July 2020, according to the complaint. The 48-year-old Brick resident has worked at Amtrak's North Brunswick facility since 2007 in positions including senior engineer and repairman.

Rodriguez was scheduled to appear in court Tuesday afternoon. A message was left with Amtrak and with an attorney for Rodriguez seeking comment.

The sales were primarily made through an online auction site, though some of the saws were sold directly to people, the complaint alleged. A buyer in Pennsylvania provided law enforcement agents with 11 boxes with Rodriguez's return address that had been used to ship chain saws in exchange for more than $7,000. In all, Rodriguez sold 77 chain saws, 103 chain saw replacement bars and 163 replacement chains to buyers in Pennsylvania, Michigan, West Virginia, Ohio, Illinois, California and South Carolina, according to the complaint.

Remains of Russian sub seen in film catch fire

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP)—The remains of a Cold War-era Russian submarine once seen in a movie starring Harrison Ford caught fire in Providence on Tuesday morning as workers were using a blowtorch to cut it up for scrap, fire officials said.

The fire at a waterfront scrap yard sent a plume of black smoke over the city at about 9:30 a.m. but was quickly extinguished. No one was hurt.

The hull is sheathed in a 3- to 4-inch (8- 10-centimeter) layer of rubber and that's what caught fire as workers cut into it with a torch, Providence Deputy Assistant Fire Chief Steve Capracotta said.

After the Cold War, the submarine known as Juliett 484 was sold and used as a restaurant and vodka bar in Helsinki, Finland, and as a set for the 2002 Ford movie "K-19: The Widowmaker."

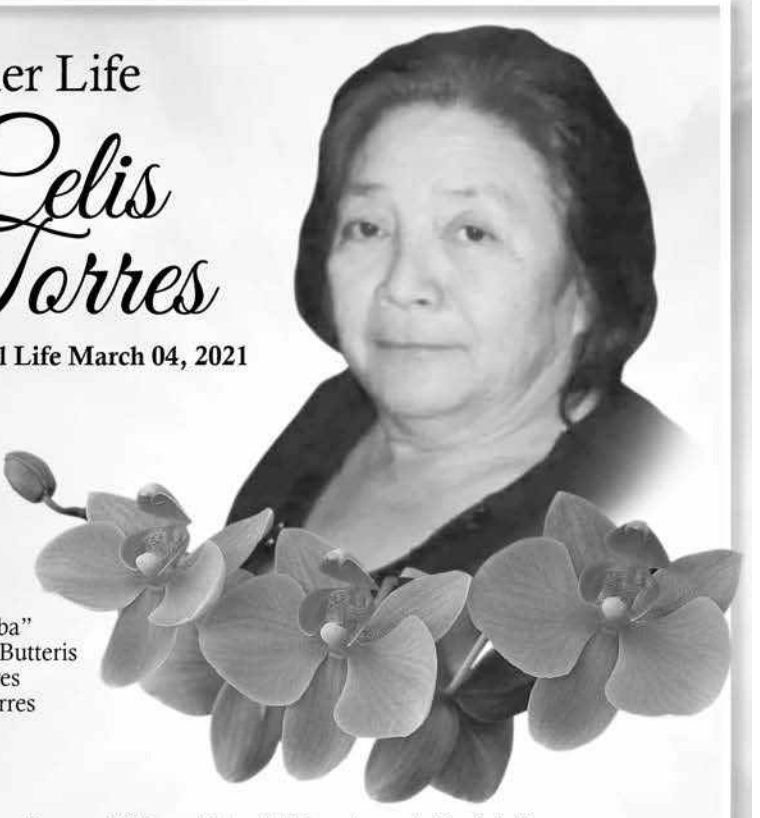
The sub wound up in Providence because the Rhode Island-based USS Saratoga Museum Foundation bought it and opened it to the public as a floating museum in 2002.

It sank during a nor'easter in 2007 and was sold for scrap.

State environmental officials have been informed of the fire, Capracotta said.

In Celebration of her Life

†Diana Celis Cabrera Torres



Born August 20, 1952 – Called to her Eternal Life March 04, 2021

In her Eternal life, she now joins:

Father: †Leonardo Camacho Cabrera
Mother: †Ignacia Celis Cabrera
Father In-Law: †Jesus Arriola Torres
Mother In-Law: †Francisca Wesley Torres
Sibling: †Jose Celis Cabrera
†Juan Celis Cabrera
†Remedio Celis Cabrera Diaz
Reared Brother: †Jesus Antonio Teregeyo "Namba"
Brother In-Laws: †Calistro S. Cepeda, †Glenn D. Butteris
†Pedro W. Torres, †Jose W. Torres
†Juan W. Torres, †Joseph W. Torres
†Malcolm C. Weidner

Her memory lives in the hearts of:

Husband: Francisco W. Torres
Children: Pamela Torres/Rodney Quitugua (Leonard/Macy Aldan (Aleina, Ayven), Patrick/Lorena (Paigey), Dylan/Virhenny (Jaylan), Tyler, Rodney Jr.)
Jeffrey/Nu'uipeau Torres (Arleena, Nani)
Kolani Torres/Brian Taijeron (Kiana/Corey White (Mason), Alyssa, Josiah, Kaidan, Luis Jr.)
Francisco "Kuks" Torres, Jr./Jermaine Cabrera (Aaliyah, Eliciana)

Sisters, Brothers, In-laws & Family

†Calistro S. & Eugenia C. Cepeda (†Delia & family, Leonora/Filomon Camacho & family, †Elsie Fejeran & family, †Leonard John, Jordonna/Bruce Sonthixay & family, Raymond Cepeda/Zania Fleming & family)
†Pedro W. & Margarita C. Torres (Margaret Bertha Torres/Frederick Pangelinan & family, Jackie/Joe Camacho & family, Peter/Trina & family, Jesse/Gina & family, Risha/Joseph Lifoifoi & family)
†Glenn D. & Victorina C. Butteris (Darrin Butteris/Doris Guerrero & family)
†Remedio C. & Vicente P. Diaz (Vicente "Cotch", Adrian, Thomas/Chelsey & family, Kekoa & family)
†Juan C. Cabrera (Rodney & family, Rowena & family, Lora Jean & family, Juan/Jadine & family, Ignatia Cabrera/Frank Hocog & family)
Dolores C. & Juan Camacho (Liela/Don Yumul & family, Peter & family, Nasia/Craig Sanchez & family, Juan Jr. & family)
Bernadita C. & Mark Palacios (Velma Palacios/Eric Benavente & family, Marvin Palacios/Lani Tarope & family, Franklin, Mark)
Pedro C. & Emerina Cabrera (Peonie/Gary Mills & family, Pennie & family, Carla Laguisma & family)

Sister & Brothers In-Laws

†Malcolm C. & Rita T. Weidner (Frances Weidner/Lamont Henderson & Family, Catherine Weidner/Isaac Ngirbabual & family, Kyle Weidner/Jami Starling & family)
Jesus W. Torres (Jamie & family, Jenel, Nicole, Vlad)
†Juan W. & Barbara Ada Torres (Frances & family, Eric, Audrey Jo Ada)
Magdalena W. Torres & Martin C. Tenorio (Peter Paul Maloney, Michelle/Carlos Sablan & family, Tim & family)
†Joseph W. & Rosita C. Torres (Joseph C. Torres/Kristina Springer & family, Robert C. Torres/Jolene Castro & family, Norman)
Teresita T. & James Applebaum (Renee/DJ Herrmann & family, Rachel)
Matilde & Lawrence Gozrulak (Jessica/James Serrano & family, Jennifer/Alex Romano & family, Joseph L/Savanah Washington)
Margarita T. & Dr. Vicente S. Aldan (Dr. Thomas/Dr. Gloria & family, Vincent/Nika & family, Pomaika'i Aldan/Rachel Reyes & family)
Maria T. & Norman Peters (Tabitha Lynn/Devin Raleigh & family, Jason Peters)
Roman W. Torres & Bridgit Imaizumi (Audry & family, Ryen, Ashley Torres/Anthony Malwelbug & family, Fermin, Dionne)

Our beloved Diana is survived by numerous godchildren, aunts, uncles, nieces & nephews.
Daily Mass of intention for the repose of her soul is being celebrated at Kristo Rai Church at 6:00 am & at Santa Soledad Church at 6:00 pm nightly except for Monday's.

Un dangkulu na Si Yu'us Ma'ase ginen i Familia

Science & Technology

China, Russia agree to build lunar research station

BEIJING (AP)—China and Russia said they will build a lunar research station, possibly on the moon's surface, marking the start of a new era in space cooperation between the two countries.

A statement posted on the website of the China National Space Administration Wednesday said the International Lunar Research Station would also be open to use by other countries, but gave no timeline for its construction.

It described the project as a "comprehensive scientific experiment base with the capability of long-term autonomous operation."

The station would be "built on the lunar surface and/or on the lunar orbit that will carry out ... scientific research activities such as the lunar exploration and utilization, lunar-based observation, basic scientific experiment and technical verification," the statement said.

It said a memorandum of understanding on the project was signed Tuesday by Zhang Kejian, administrator of the China National Space Administration, and Russian space agency Roscosmos chief Dmitry Rogozin.

China drew heavily on Russian expertise in the early years of its space program, but has largely forged its own path since launching its first crewed mission in 2003. Despite that, China's Shenzhou spaceships closely resemble Russia's Soyuz capsules and the CNSA has worked with countries around the world, apart from the U.S. Congress bans almost all contacts between NASA and China over concerns about technology theft and the secretive, military-backed nature of China's space program.

Russia and China will "adhere to the principle of 'co-consultation, joint construction, and shared benefits,' facilitate extensive cooperation in the ILRS, open to all interested countries and international partners, strengthen scientific research exchanges, and promote humanity's exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purpose," the Chinese statement said.

TECH Q&A: Why your Android phone may stop connecting to your car

By STEVE ALEXANDER
Star Tribune (Minneapolis)

Steve Alexander covers technology for the Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Readers may write to him at Tech Q&A, 425 Portland Ave. S., Minneapolis, Minn. 55488-0002; email: steve.j.alexander@gmail.com. Please include a full name, city and phone number.*

Q: My phone, a Google Pixel 3 XL, used to be able to play the directions from Google Maps through its wireless connection to my 2016 Toyota RAV4. But a couple of years ago that quit working, and now I can't even get Google Maps directions on my phone unless I turn the car off first. However, I can use the phone to play Google Maps audio in a rental car. What can I do?

A: Your phone and car may no longer be using compatible versions of Android Auto, the software that normally links them.

Toyota was behind other car manufacturers in adding Android Auto compatibility, and didn't begin putting the software in the RAV4 until the 2020 model year. As a result, someone other than Toyota added the electronics and software for Android Auto—called a "stereo head unit"—to your 2016 car.

The question is whether the Android Auto software in your car has been updated since it was installed. If it hasn't, it may no longer be compatible with your phone, which has probably had several updates to its Android operating system and its Android Auto app. That would explain why your phone can get map directions in rental cars (they probably have up-to-date Android Auto software) and why your phone doesn't get map directions in your car unless your turn the car off (which probably turns off the flawed connection between your phone and the car.)

How can you fix the problem? Toyota dealerships may be able to upgrade the Android Auto software in car models sold with that feature, but they are unlikely to do it for cars like yours that have an aftermarket stereo head unit. So, your best bet is to try updating Android Auto on your phone and car yourself (some cars can receive an update through the phone, see tinyurl.com/yk-n85c4h). If that doesn't work, you will need to ask the manufacturer of your car's stereo head unit about software updates. Major manufacturers include JVC, Pioneer, Sony and Alpine Electronics (see tinyurl.com/wymfmfds).

Q: I used to wirelessly print the newspaper's crossword puzzles from my iPad using my Google account to connect to "Cloud Print." But it stopped working, so I had to start printing via the Apple Safari browser. (A third option, HP Smart, won't print, either, because it says the connection is "not secure.") Why is this happening?

A: You can't use the Google Cloud Print service because it was discontinued on Dec. 31.

Cloud Print relied on the internet. It used your Google account to upload the crossword puzzles to an online server, which then sent them back to your printer.

The Safari browser doesn't depend on an internet server. It uses the iPad's AirPrint software to send the crossword puzzles to your printer over your home Wi-Fi network.

The HP Smart software should function the same way as AirPrint. The most likely reason it doesn't work is that you have enabled HP Smart's optional security settings, which are designed to protect your printer's memory and data from outside tampering. Those settings may be blocking you from printing the crosswords directly from an internet website on the grounds that it's too risky (you might be downloading malware.) If you find that too restrictive, you can turn off the security settings for your printer by using the controls in the HP Smart app.

1ST YEAR DEATH ANNIVERSARY

†Joaquin Cepeda Pangelinan

(Jackpot) Boichit/Bolis

A year ago, our Lord called our beloved brother to begin his new life in paradise. On that day, we lost a very special person in our lives.

Through time, our pain in losing and grieving, we were embraced by our families and friends with support, words of comfort and with that we are forever grateful.

In remembering and celebrating his anniversary of his new life, we the family are respectfully inviting our relatives and friends to join us in prayers of the Eucharist.

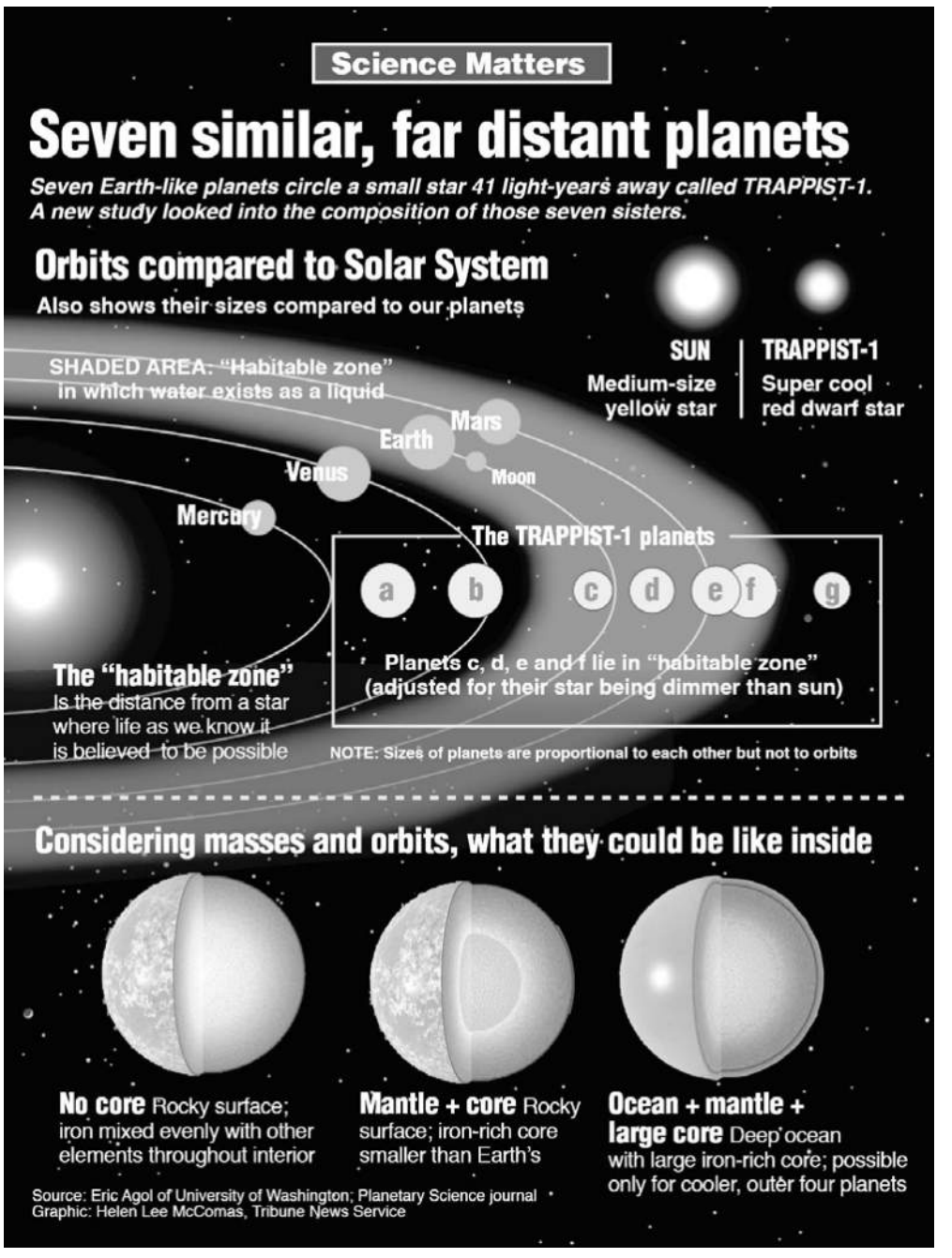
Daily Mass will begin on March 07, 2021 Sunday at 6:00am at Kristo Rai Church.

On Monday, March 15, 2021 after the mass, an appreciation breakfast will follow immediately which will be served at the social hall.

Your presence, thoughts and prayers are greatly appreciated.

Thank you and Dangkulu na si Yu'us Ma'ase

From his siblings (BOLIS), his children/Frances and Family


Science Matters
Seven similar, far distant planets
Seven Earth-like planets circle a small star 41 light-years away called TRAPPIST-1. A new study looked into the composition of those seven sisters.
Orbits compared to Solar System
Also shows their sizes compared to our planets
SHADED AREA: "Habitable zone" in which water exists as a liquid
SUN
Medium-size yellow star
TRAPPIST-1
Super cool red dwarf star
Mercury
Venus
Earth
Mars
Moon
The TRAPPIST-1 planets
a
b
c
d
e
f
g
Planets c, d, e and f lie in "habitable zone" (adjusted for their star being dimmer than sun)
The "habitable zone"
Is the distance from a star where life as we know it is believed to be possible
NOTE: Sizes of planets are proportional to each other but not to orbits
Considering masses and orbits, what they could be like inside
No core Rocky surface; iron mixed evenly with other elements throughout interior
Mantle + core Rocky surface; iron-rich core smaller than Earth's
Ocean + mantle + large core Deep ocean with large iron-rich core; possible only for cooler, outer four planets
Source: Eric Agol of University of Washington; Planetary Science journal
Graphic: Helen Lee McComas, Tribune News Service

Life & Style

Invalidations of Meghan's claims of racism hurt Black women

CHICAGO (AP)—As Prince Harry and Meghan's TV interview reverberates internationally, it's left the more than 50 million viewers grappling with the couple's claims of racism and lack of support that Meghan says drove her to thoughts of suicide.

But for many Black women worldwide, the headlines and social media discussions were painfully familiar. With social media conversations questioning whether racism affected Meghan's treatment by the British press and royal family, many Black women say it is yet another example of a Black woman's experiences with racism being disregarded and denied.

"White supremacy seeks to isolate you, make you feel like no one is listening and no one is supporting you. It uses that as a tool to keep in power," said Gaye Theresa Johnson, associate professor in the Department of African American Studies at UCLA. "And so when you aren't validated in your feelings or feel supported, that does real harm."

Meghan, the daughter of a white father and a Black mother, said that when she was pregnant with her son Archie, a member of the royal family expressed "concerns ... about how dark his skin might be." The former television star also said she sought mental health help through the palace's human resources department but was told there was nothing it could do.

This image provided by Harpo Productions shows Prince Harry, from left, and Meghan, Duchess of Sussex, in conversation with Oprah Winfrey. AP

Thanks to Winfrey and royals, CBS morning show makes history

NEW YORK (AP)—Thank you, Oprah!

For the first time on record, CBS' morning news show on Monday had a bigger audience than ABC's "Good Morning America" and NBC's "Today" show, the Nielsen company said.

The show featured Winfrey talking about her explosive interview with Prince Harry and Meghan that aired the night before on CBS, along with some outtakes that hadn't been aired.

Nielsen records that date back to 1991 reveal that there had never been a single day that "CBS This Morning," nor any of its predecessors, beat their two rivals.

"Let that sink in for a moment," CBS News President Susan Zirinsky said in a memo to her staff on Wednesday.

"CBS This Morning" had 4.79 million viewers on Monday, or more than 2 million more than the show gets on a typical day, Nielsen said. "Good Morning America" had 3.35 million and "Today" had 3.18 million.

Although the precise Nielsen records go back to only 1991, there's a strong likelihood that CBS has never won, period. Starting in 1982, the network has tried a succession of different morning formats and personnel in an attempt to be competitive with its more established competitors.

More than 50 million people worldwide have seen Winfrey's interview, with more expected. CBS is rerunning the show on Friday night.

Joint custody of son, no spousal support in Adele divorce

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Adele will share custody of her 8-year-old son and won't be paying child support to her now-ex-husband Simon Konecki, according to divorce documents obtained Wednesday by The Associated Press.

Adele

The couple separated in August of 2019, and Adele filed for divorce the following month. A Los Angeles judge finalized the divorce last week.

According to the documents, the 32-year-old Adele and the 46-year-old Konecki used mediation to amicably reach the terms of the split. Both waived the right to seek spousal support, and both agreed to joint legal and physical custody of son Angelo, who was born in 2012. The papers say they will seek to resolve any issues without litigation.

Adele kept her original legal name, Adele Adkins, during her marriage.

The British singing superstar married Konecki, cofounder of Life Water, an ecofriendly brand of bottled water, in May of 2018, according to court documents. But she referred to him as "my husband" during a Grammy acceptance speech in 2017, and the two had been a couple for several years when they wed.

China blasts BBC report after summoning UK ambassador

BEIJING (AP)—China is complaining anew about recent reporting by the BBC, days after summoning the British ambassador to Beijing to register displeasure over a recent article she penned defending press freedom.

The Chinese Embassy in London posted a statement on its website Thursday saying it had written to the BBC expressing "strong dissatisfaction" and urging the broadcaster to "abandon bias, correct its mistake and report China in [an] objective, fair and balanced manner."

On Tuesday, China's Foreign Ministry summoned Ambassador Caroline Wilson over her article posted on the embassy's Chinese microblog in which she said critical reporting of China did not imply hatred or disrespect for the country itself. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian on Wednesday said Wilson's article reflected her "deep-rooted ideological prejudices."

The criticism reflects deep Chinese anger both over the BBC's reporting on sensitive issues such as the coronavirus outbreak and abuses against Muslim minorities in Xinjiang, and the British governments decision to open a pathway for residency and eventual citizenship for millions of Hong Kong residents.

Mom longs to reunite family despite advice from friends

DEAR ABBY: I recently got into a huge fight with my boyfriend, which caused us to break up and me to move two hours away to stay with my mom. We have a beautiful 6-month-old daughter, and I still love him very much. He has begged me to move back and has shown me he still has feelings for me.

Because of past abuse from family and previous partners, I find it very hard to trust. I would love to go back, but I keep being told that it would be a mistake. I want to be a family again, but I don't want the people who tell me it's a mistake to be mad at me. Must I give in and stay away or follow my heart and go back?

MIXED UP IN MISSOURI

DEAR MIXED UP: I wish you had disclosed more about the fight that caused you to move away and take the baby. It must have been a doozy. Was he cheating? Physically or emotionally abusive? If it was any of those, I don't think it is advisable to reconcile.

Why are "people" advising you not to go back with him? Are their reasons valid? If they aren't, perhaps you should worry less about pleasing them and more about accepting responsibility for your own choices.

Should you follow your heart? Yes, if it leads you and this man to a licensed couples counselor for help in resolving your problems before they get out of hand again, and deciding what would be in the best interest of your child.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: My husband and I just got married. We have only one problem: his ex-girlfriend. She used to be my best friend, but we fell out years ago.

She hadn't contacted him in a long time, but since she found out we got married, she has been texting him begging to meet up. She messaged me once asking for all of us to get together, but she messages him to meet her alone and "talk." He ignores her and shows me the messages.

Should I step in and tell her to back off or ignore her as he is doing? I trust and love my husband, but she's becoming a pest and starting to annoy me and him.

TROUBLED IN TENNESSEE

DEAR TROUBLED: Because silence hasn't successfully conveyed the message that you and your husband aren't interested in renewing the relationship, HE should be the one to tell her—in plain English. If he doesn't do that, then you should.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: Last year was a tough one for me and my family. In addition to the COVID mess, I lost my best friend of 30 years, and one of my sisters-in-law lost her best friend of 50 years.

We were talking about each of our losses recently, and she mentioned that she has no pictures of her and her friend together. I said the same about my friend. Right then I decided that no matter how bad my hair, makeup, etc. looked, I wouldn't shy away from having my photo taken. Sometimes we don't realize how much a candid snapshot can mean until it is too late. Do you agree?

MOMENT IN TIME IN TEXAS

DEAR MOMENT: Yes, as a matter of fact, I do. I have been guilty of photo-dodging, and I am sure many others have been, too. After reading your letter, I am resolving to do better in the future. Thank you!

■■■

To order "How to Write Letters for All Occasions," send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby -- Letter Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. Shipping and handling are included in the price.

DEAR ABBY

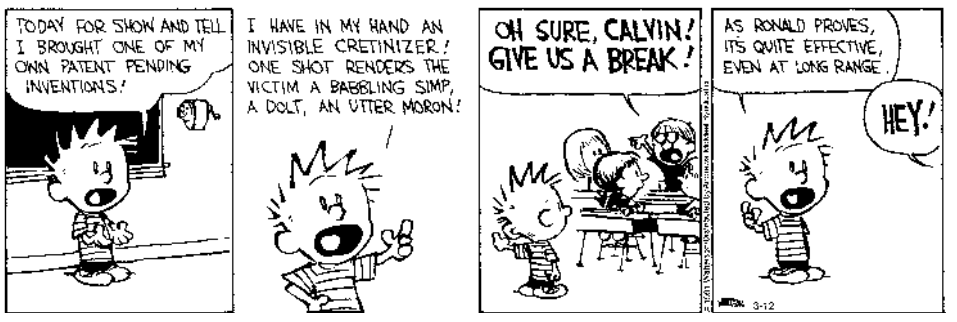
By Abigail Van Buren
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


TODAY FOR SHOW AND TELL I BROUGHT ONE OF MY OWN PATENT PENDING INVENTIONS!
I HAVE IN MY HAND AN INVISIBLE CRETINIZER! ONE SHOT RENDERS THE VICTIM A BABBLING SIMP, A DOLT, AN UTTER MORON!
OH SURE, CALVIN! GIVE US A BREAK!
AS RONALD PROVES, IT'S QUITE EFFECTIVE, EVEN AT LONG RANGE.
HEY!
3-12

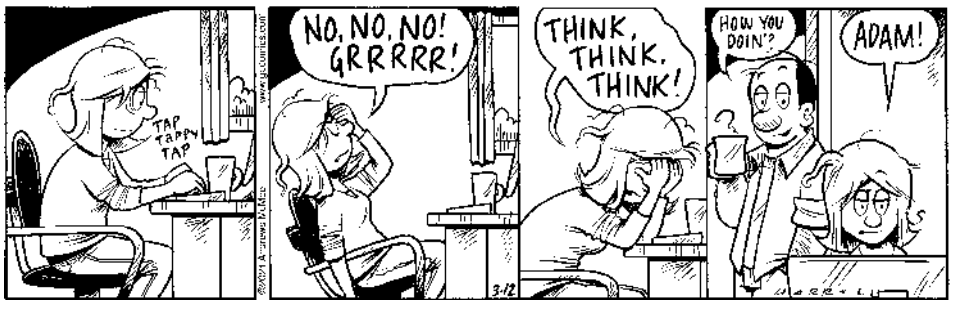
Garfield®

By Jim Davis

IN HIGH SCHOOL, I TRIED OUT FOR FOOTBALL
BUT I GOT HURT
HOW?
PAPER CUT FROM THE APPLICATION
A CAREER-ENDING INJURY
JIM DAVIS 3-12

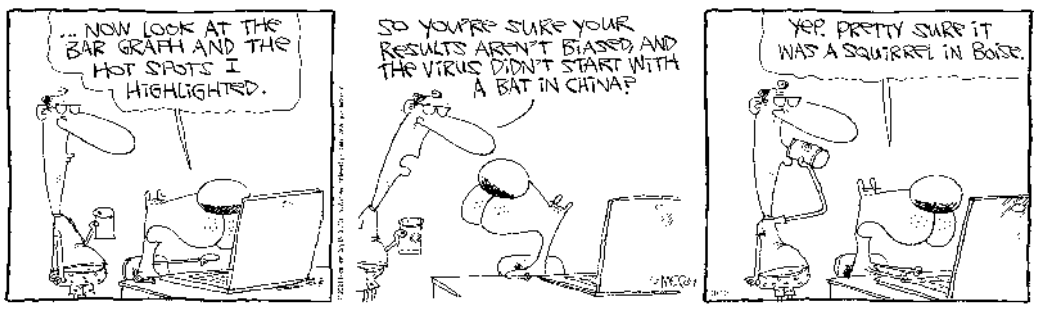
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


... NOW LOOK AT THE BAR GRAPH AND THE HOT SPOTS I HIGHLIGHTED.
SO YOU'RE SURE YOUR RESULTS AREN'T BIASED AND THE VIRUS DIDN'T START WITH A BAT IN CHINA?
YEP. PRETTY SURE IT WAS A SQUIRREL IN BOISE.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Barrels
6 Ann Patchett's "— Canto"
9 Nipper's co.
12 St. Teresa's city
13 Brit. record label
14 Solo of "Star Wars"
15 Watch crystal holder
16 Effervescing
18 Fanatic
20 Hydroxyl compound
21 Up to
23 German article
24 Steak choice
25 Leopold's co-defendant
27 "When pigs fly!"
29 Used hair rollers
31 Place for three men
35 Archipelago part
37 Spanish ayes
38 Rural buildings
41 New Deal agcy.
43 Buddhist sect
44 Latin 101 word
45 "Mask" actor Eric
47 More lightheaded
49 From Limerick
52 Away from WSW
53 Bikini half
54 1899 fighters
55 Scepter
56 Atlas page
57 "— uphill battle"

DOWN
1 Taxi
2 "Hail, Caesar!"
3 Extremely hot day
4 Swiss artist Paul
5 Leafy lunch
6 Prior to
7 Send forth
8 Actress Taylor
9 Horned beast
10 Church law
11 Protractor measure
17 Striped equines
19 Tennis legend Ivan
21 Pampering, for short
22 Debtor's letters
24 Sawbuck
26 Crepe's cousin
28 The "V" of IVF
30 Curved letter
32 Agitated states
33 Exploit
34 Crib
36 Catch
38 Ruth — Ginsburg
39 Acid type
40 Tore down
42 Suspect's excuse
45 Antitoxins
46 Jog
48 Co. that created Watson
50 Madrid Mrs.
51 QVC alternative

Solution time: 25 mins.

S	A	R	I		P	C	P		S	T	A	B
G	U	A	C		A	N	A		C	A	R	E
T	R	U	E		K	C	S		A	N	N	A
S	A	L	A	M			T	A	R	G	E	T
			G	A	S			O	A	R		
C	U	T	E		T	A	S	K	B	A	R	S
A	S	A			A	P	P			M	L	I
L	O	N	D	O	N	E	R		P	S	S	T
		T	A	D			A	W	E			
C	O	R	N	E	T		Y	E	L	L	O	W
O	N	U	S		E	R	T		T	A	R	A
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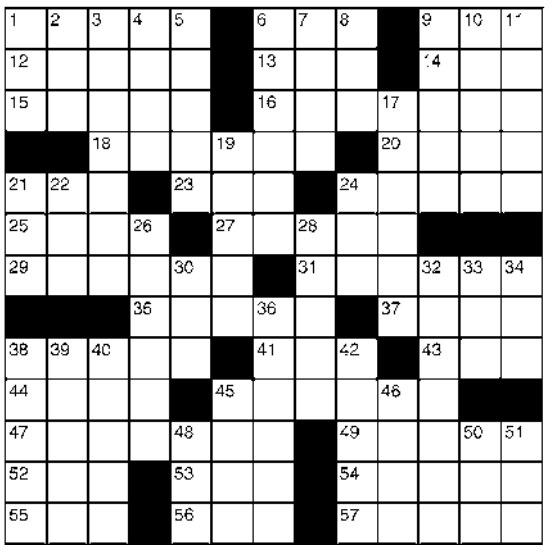
A	S	S	N		S	I	N		D	E	L	T

Yesterday's answer 3-12



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Anthony Davis, 28; Thora Birch, 39; Johnny Knoxville, 50; Terrence Howard, 52.

Happy Birthday: Take the initiative if you want to get things done your way. Check the appropriate way to approach a project you plan to pursue this year by reaching out to the authorities who preside over such activities. Having current information and paperwork will make your life easier and the success you encounter satisfying. Leave nothing to chance. Your numbers are 7, 13, 22, 25, 38, 40, 46.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* An opportunity coupled with hard work and enthusiasm will help you excel. Use your clout, connections and intelligence to orchestrate what you want to happen. Refuse to let someone strong-arm you into something you disagree with. ✪✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Take a close look at what's going on around you. Listen to the opposition and make assessments before you respond. A little charm mixed with the power of persuasion will help you win support and respect. Offer peace and love. ✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Step back. Use the experience you have combined with intelligence to figure out what's best for you. Refuse to let someone coerce you into something that will cause mayhem or cost you your position. Don't let your emotions take over. ✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Show everyone what you are capable of doing. Use your skills, originality and vision to encourage others to help you bring about change. Getting back to basics, simplifying your life and sharing your feelings with someone you love will pay off. ✪✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Uncertainty will set in if you get involved in a joint venture. Reserve judgment, and don't lay your cash on the table prematurely. Question the process and proposal being offered, make adjustments and take part only when you feel at ease. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Refuse to get caught in an emotional argument. Put your energy into making positive gains, improving your lifestyle and meaningful relationships, and committing to someone or something you want to pursue. Personal growth, romance and gaining stability are favored. ✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Put your head down, and focus your energy on something meaningful to you. Whether it's learning something new, fixing up your space or starting a new hobby, the more you put in, the more you will get in return. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Stop worrying about the inevitable, and focus on making your life better. Pack up what you don't need; get the clutter and dead weight out of your life. The positive changes you make will lead to the freedom you desire. ✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Opportunity will come at a price. Weigh the pros and cons before you make a decision. Verify information and do the math before you take part in something that might put you at risk physically, emotionally or financially. ✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Take a different approach to the way you do things, and you'll get remarkable results. Think outside the box in order to turn a skill you have into a moneymaking project. It's up to you to bring about change that leads to happiness. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Nurture your relationships with friends, relatives and peers. Let go of situations that aren't working for you, and focus on what's possible. Liberate yourself by putting your energy into personal growth and self-improvement, not trying to change others. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Spend more time with people who bring out the best in you. Motivation combined with desire will bring about positive change. Take care of details and live by the rules. You will gain momentum and the success you desire. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are resourceful, insightful and loving. You are entertaining and proactive.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	5		2	4	6		
6						4	
		8		9			
2	3				7		
5							8
	7				1		4
		1		2			
8						6	
	2	6	3		5		

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 3/12

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

2	5	8	3	7	1	4	9	6
1	3	9	2	4	6	7	8	5
7	6	4	8	9	5	2	1	3
5	2	6	9	3	7	8	4	1
8	7	3	6	1	4	9	5	2
4	9	1	5	8	2	3	6	7
9	4	7	1	6	3	5	2	8
6	8	2	7	5	9	1	3	4
3	1	5	4	2	8	6	7	9

Difficulty Level ★★★

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

PHONE BILLS Solution: 10 letters

E	E	S	G	N	I	V	A	S	S	T	S	O	C	S
C	V	S	L	L	A	C	A	S	E	S	(F)	Y	S	R
N	E	I	U	T	C	A	R	T	N	O	C	(E)	E	C
A	N	R	T	O	T	A	L	X	T	L	C	D	(E)	U
L	T	G	U	A	I	A	A	E	E	O	I	B	S	(S)
A	S	N	N	T	R	V	D	T	N	V	T	U	E	T
B	T	Y	T	I	C	T	E	D	O	E	E	S	X	O
I	S	L	I	A	M	I	S	R	R	M	G	I	A	M
L	T	N	E	M	Y	A	P	I	P	E	A	N	T	E
L	I	R	E	L	I	B	O	M	N	M	S	E	N	R
I	D	O	A	P	A	P	E	R	E	I	U	S	U	S
N	E	E	N	V	A	T	A	D	T	T	M	S	O	N
G	R	D	S	I	E	Y	A	L	P	S	I	D	M	A
A	C	I	D	O	N	L	I	N	E	L	O	C	A	L
C	O	V	E	R	A	G	E	D	A	R	G	P	U	P

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Account, Address, Administrative, Amount, Area, Balance, Billing, Business, Calls, Cases, City, Contract, Costs, Coverage, Credits, Customer, Cycle, Data, Display, Events, Fees, Local, Mail, Mobile, Online, Paid, Paper, Payment, Picture, Plans, Previous, Provider, Roaming, Savings, Seconds, Taxes, Texts, Time, Total, Travel, Upgrade, Usage, Video

Yesterday's Answer: Observers

Jo's Jewels Collector's Edition is back by popular demand! Purchase online at www.WonderWordBooks.com or call 1-800-642-6480.

Embiid emerges as NBA MVP front-runner for East-best 76ers

AP

In this Feb. 19, 2021, file photo, Philadelphia 76ers' Joel Embiid reacts after making a basket during the second half of an NBA basketball game against the Chicago Bulls in Philadelphia.

\PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Joel Embiid sank a step-back jumper in the final minute of the best game of his NBA career, ran back with his arms raised high over his head as piped-in "M-V-P!" "M-V-P!" chants blared through the arena and beckoned with his hands for imaginary fans — for sure, the Philadelphia 76ers' fanatics watching at home — to get loud.

Embiid plays with as much fun as any MVP front-runner, and on the February night he dropped 50 points on the Chicago Bulls, he sent a sign to the fans they are with him in spirit.

"The fans are always there for me when I play," Embiid said. "I play for the fans, I play for the city. All my goals when I play basketball are related to the city of Philadelphia. I feel like they're here for us even when they're not. I always feel their presence." Guess what, Joel: Sixers fans are allowed back in the building on Sunday, and if they are among the lucky 3,100 to snag a ticket — lower-center tickets can be found on StubHub for up to $1,250 a pop — they'll surely show the love worthy of 20,000 back to Embiid.

At 26, Embiid has not only led the Sixers (24-12) to the best record in the Eastern Conference, he's at last blossomed into the durable, mature and downright dominant force the Sixers expected when they made him the No. 3 pick of the 2014 draft.

"I just want to destroy everything in my path," Embiid said.

Let's not raise a "Mission Accomplished" banner quite yet in the Wells Fargo Center rafters.

But what Embiid has done through the All-Star break has made him the betting +200 MVP favorite (Los Angeles Lakers forward LeBron James is next at +225) and turned — along with fellow All-Star Ben Simmons and Tobias Harris — the Sixers into perhaps the only team that can give Brooklyn a run out of the East. The Sixers have not won the NBA championship since 1983.

"It's nice to have a big guy in the MVP talk," Hall of Famer Shaquille O'Neal told The Associated Press. "You have to take a high-percentage shot and take advantage of your opponent. He's finally playing like that. This is how you play. You want to be good, you want to be great or you want to be the greatest? You decide."

Embiid, who missed what would have been his first two seasons because of injuries, still put up strong numbers in his first four. But he always left hints there was so much untapped potential in his about 7-foot frame.

His 30.2 points are behind only Washington's Bradley Beal and about 2½ points higher than his previous career best. Embiid has five games of 40-plus points and 10-plus rebounds in 30 games—the rest of the NBA players combined hit that mark only four times—highlighted by that 50-point, 17-board game on Feb. 17 against the Bulls. Embiid was the first 76er to score 50 since Allen Iverson in 2005.

He is trying to become the first Sixer to win NBA MVP — the fans call it an MVBiid campaign — since Iverson in 2001. Moses Malone (1982-83), Julius Erving (1980-81) and Wilt Chamberlain (who won three straight from 1965-1968) all won the NBA's top honor.

■ Embiid's 13 career 40-10 games tie him with Charles Barkley for second-most in team history, behind Chamberlain (31).

— He leads the NBA in total free throws made (298), free throws made per game (9.9) and free-throw attempts per game (11.6).

■ Embiid, Barkley and Chamberlain are the only three 76ers with at least 900 points and 300 rebounds within their first 30 games of a season.

Embiid said he cared more this season about winning defensive player of the year—though he may have to fight off Simmons—than taking any other individual award.

"When I came in the league, I never thought I would be that good offensively," he said. "I always focused on the defensive side. That's been my goal, to win it."

Leading the 76ers to their first NBA Finals trip since 2001 could bolster his credentials for individual awards. The Sixers previously bottomed out in the standings for a shot at landing a franchise player like Embiid. They did have back-to-back 50-win seasons and consecutive trips to the East semis with Embiid but were swept out of the first round last season.

"Without winning, you're not part of those conversations when it comes to defensive player of the year and MVP and all that stuff," Embiid said. "That's the first thing. I want to win. That's all I care about."

Brett Brown was fired after the Sixers were swept and Doc Rivers, a respected coach who won the 2008 NBA title with Boston, was brought in to round Embiid and Simmons into championship form. Daryl Morey, the former Houston Rockets executive, was tasked with running Philadelphia's basketball operations and helped change the narrative that the two franchise stars could coexist on, and even off, the court.

"One of the things I heard coming in here was that they don't fit," Rivers said. "My eyes kept telling me they do fit. They fit very well because of their skill sets. I think now they see that. I think that gives them confidence."

The Sixers are helped by Embiid largely staying in the lineup. The oft-injured center has missed five games because of back tightness and one because of right knee pain and will sit out Thursday's game against Chicago because of COVID-19 protocols. Embiid, who became a father in September, hired a personal chef, nutritionist, physical therapist and massage therapist in the shortened offseason to keep in peak physical condition throughout the condensed season.

Embiid also has cut back to a career-low three 3-point attempts a game this season after attempting as many as 263 (hitting at a 30% clip) in 2018-19. His average shot attempt this year is just shy of 12 feet.

"Whenever I see Joel, I'm going, 'I don't know why you shoot so many 3s,'" said his college coach, Kansas' Bill Self. "'Why don't you play with your back to your basket? Nobody can guard you.' I think that's a big reason he's having the season he's having."

Morey, though, is fine with Embiid shooting from deep.

"He's a great shooter, maybe the best 7-foot-2 or whatever shooters ever," Morey said. "You should use those skills. He's so skilled in so many ways."

Embiid has also become a most valuable philanthropist.

Among his charitable endeavors, he committed to donating his $100,000 All-Star Game winnings to area homeless shelters, he partnered with a grocery chain in December to help five families with rent or mortgage relief and he pledged with Sixers ownership a combined $1.3 million to Penn Medicine for COVID-19 antibody testing of front-line health care workers.

He champions his teammates, and like so many greats, he is motivated by any slights, real or imagined. Witness the 40 points and 19 rebounds he put up on Rudy Gobert and best-in-the-West Utah Jazz in the final game before the break.

"It's nice to see him separate himself in a way to be the most dominate big man in the world," Self said. "We thought all along he had it in him, but we're seeing it now."

Popovich announces Aldridge will be moving on from Spurs

DALLAS (AP)—LaMarcus Aldridge has played his final game for the San Antonio Spurs, with coach Gregg Popovich announcing Wednesday night that the team and the seven-time All-Star have mutually agreed to seek opportunities for him elsewhere.

The Spurs will try to trade Aldridge before the March 25 deadline. If no trades are worked out, the team could simply buy Aldridge out and let him sign elsewhere as a free agent.

"LaMarcus is not with the team," Popovich said before the Spurs played the Dallas Mavericks. "He's healthy, in that respect, but we've mutually agreed to work out some opportunities for him and that'll be elsewhere. So, he won't be with the team moving forward."

The 35-year-old Aldridge was in his sixth season with the Spurs after playing his first nine NBA seasons with the Portland Trail Blazers.

The No. 2 overall pick in the 2006 draft played in 21 games this season, averaging 13.7 points and 4.5 rebounds in 25.9 minutes — a career low in rebounds and his fewest points and minutes since he was a rookie.

Popovich insisted that the decision to part ways was best for both sides, and spoke highly of Aldridge.

"There was no problem there. We just think this is a win-win for both LaMarcus and for the club," Popovich said. "So, when an opportunity arises, that'll be up to management, his agent, you know, that sort of thing. We'll all move forward."

In Aldridge's last three appearances before the All-Star break, Popovich moved him to the bench. Prior to that, he missed six games over three weeks with a hip injury and then sat out the last two games before the break with a stomach ailment.

"He's been a great teammate," Popovich said. "He's done everything we've asked. And at this point, we'd just like to do something that will work for him as much as for our club, because he deserves that."

Valanciunas scores 29, leads Grizzlies over Wizards

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP)—The Washington Wizards wanted to concentrate on keeping Memphis from scoring in the paint. Grizzlies center Jonas Valanciunas made sure the strategy didn't work.

Valanciunas scored a season-high 29 points and matched his season best with 20 rebounds to lead the Grizzlies to a 127-112 victory over Washington on Wednesday night.

With Valanciunas controlling the middle and Ja Morant adding 21 points and 10 assists on drives to the basket, Memphis managed 78 paint points. Rookie Desmond Bane complemented the inside scoring with a season-high 20 points, going 5 of 8 from 3-point range.

"It was four days without basketball," Valanciunas said of getting back on the court. "It was great to play basketball again. Great to be with the group, win a game and have some fun playing."

Bradley Beal scored 21 points for the Wizards but was 6 of 22 from the field, including only 1 of 8 from 3-point range. Russell Westbrook finished with 20 points, while Davis Bertans and Deni Avdija scored 13 apiece.

Mavericks 115, Spurs 104

In Dallas, Luka Doncic had 22 points, 12 rebounds and 12 assists for his 33rd triple-double, Kristaps Porzingis added 28 points and 14 rebounds and the Dallas Mavericks and beat the San Antonio Spurs 115-104 on Wednesday night.

Dallas finished with a 17-4 run against a Spurs team that will no longer have seven-time All-Star LaMarcus Aldridge in the lineup. Before the game, coach Gregg Popovich announced that the 35-year-old Aldridge, in his sixth season in San Antonio, would no longer be with the team by mutual agreement.

DeMar DeRozan had 30 points, 11 assists and four steals for the Spurs. Patty Mills added 14 points and Rudy Gay had 13.

‘Healthy’ Prescott signs richest contract in Cowboys history

By SCHUYLER DIXON
AP PRO FOOTBALL WRITER

AP
Dallas Cowboys quarterback Dak Prescott speaks during a news conference at the team’s NFL football practice facility in Frisco, Texas, Wednesday, March 10, 2021.

Dak Prescott walked briskly and bounced up the couple of steps onto the stage for the announcement of the richest contract in the storied history of the Dallas Cowboys for their latest star quarterback.

It was five months almost to the day Wednesday since the gruesome ankle injury that ended Prescott’s 2020 season and led to immediate questions whether the big payday would ever come after a long stalemate.

The answer came two days earlier when the sides — two years after they started talking — agreed on a $160 million, four-year contract with the NFL’s second-highest annual average behind Kansas City star Patrick Mahomes.

Now Prescott is ready to answer the questions about coming back from the compound fracture and dislocation of his right ankle against the New York Giants on Oct. 11.

“I thought about jogging out here and jumping up on the stage,” said Prescott, who broke into a wild smile while crossing the stage at team headquarters in Frisco, north of Dallas. “But I don’t know if you all are ready for that. But I’m healthy.”

Prescott wouldn’t put a timeline on when he would be fully cleared, but said, “I’ll be ready when it matters.”

For now, Prescott was basking in the hourlong news conference that served as a celebration of the fourth $100 million contract in club history. The first was quarterback Tony Romo, whose back injury in the 2016 preseason opened the door for Prescott to be the starter from the first game of his rookie year.

Prescott’s contract included NFL records with a $66 million signing bonus and a first-year value of $75 million. There is a no-trade clause, and the Cowboys can’t use the franchise tag after the contract. This agreement came a day before a deadline for the Cowboys to place the tag on Prescott for a second consecutive season.

Most importantly for the Cowboys as they try to end a 25-year run without even reaching the NFC championship game, Prescott’s salary cap hit will be $22.2 million instead of $37.7 million under the tag. Dallas needs help on defense and now has some money to spend.

“I feel great about our future,” owner Jerry Jones said. “I don’t mind telling you the main reason I feel great is the guy sitting right next door to me.”

Before the injury, Prescott had started every game since the beginning of his rookie year after Romo got hurt. Prescott was the 2016 NFL Offensive Rookie of the Year while leading the Cowboys to the No. 1 seed in the NFC, and two years later won his first playoff game while reaching his second Pro Bowl.

Negotiations on a new contract started the following offseason, when Prescott was going into the final year of a four-year deal that paid him a total of about $4 million as a fourth-round pick. That included $2 million in the final season.

Prescott’s abbreviated 2020 season was on a $31.4 million franchise tag, and playing on a second tag would have significantly increased the chance of the 27-year-old QB leaving in free agency next year.

“Never in a million years did I imagine not being a Cowboy once I put on this uniform and put on this star,” Prescott said. “So through it all, through the two years I guess you can say or more, there was never a slight doubt in my mind that I wouldn’t wear the star for the rest of my life.”

Jones never wavered in saying he considered Prescott a franchise quarterback, but acknowledged the drawn-out negotiations created debate that took on “a life of its own” over whether the Cowboys believed in the former Mississippi State standout for the long term.

“Don’t confuse that with how right we think this decision is, and how right and how much it’s been there from the very beginning,” Jones said. “This fits what I and what I want our Cowboy fans to think about when we think about the Dallas Cowboys.”

Even before Prescott’s injury, the Cowboys started slowly in coach Mike McCarthy’s first season. But Prescott was still leading the NFL in yards passing for the league’s No. 1 offense. Those numbers plummeted as Dallas lost its first four games without Prescott, falling to 2-7 on the way to a 6-10 finish.

With the big contract, Prescott becomes the focal point of ending by far the longest stretch in franchise history without reaching a Super Bowl — more than twice as long as the 10 years it took Dallas to go from an expansion team to its first Super Bowl appearance during the 1970 season.

Since going 13-3 as a rookie, Prescott’s regular-season record is 29-24. And he will be trying to end a two-year run of missing the playoffs, which last happened to the Cowboys in 2013.

“Eagerness, excitement, anxiousness, to give this organization and the Jones family everything they invested in,” Prescott said. “That’s a Super Bowl, and that’s to go win.”

NFL sets salary cap at $182.5M, down 8% from 2020

By BARRY WILNER
AP PRO FOOTBALL WRITER

Like Lamar Jackson under pressure from the pass rush, let the scrambling begin.

The NFL’s salary cap will be $182.5 million per team in the upcoming season, a drop of 8% from 2020. The league’s loss of revenues due to the coronavirus pandemic caused the first decrease in the cap since 2011, which followed an uncapped season.

Free agency begins next Wednesday, though the “legal tampering” period starts Monday.

The NFL is close to agreement on extensions of its broadcast contracts, but those deals will not affect the 2021 season. At least the current cap is $2.5 million higher than projected last month. Last summer, the players’ union and league agreed to a cap minimum of $175 million, but that number jumped by $5 million in February and was set at $182.5 million on Wednesday.

“My stepson asked me this morning, ‘Hey, is that extra $2.5 million going to help you?’” Rams general manager Les Snead said. “I’m like, ‘No, I don’t think 2.5 is really going to help us.’ If you look at where we are and look at how much we’re over, 2.5 is probably a little bit of a drop in the bucket.

“Today’s news, the extra $2.5 million, isn’t necessarily going to move the needle with us, but it is very, very helpful now to know that it’s not going to be 188, per se. That would have been a little more breathing room. So to know now, we know what the finish line is. We’ve been running a marathon, and we didn’t know whether we were going to run 25 miles, 24, 26 or 28. At least now we know it’s 26.2.”

It might seem like 182.5 million miles for the Rams: They currently are $41 million beyond the cap.

The Eagles were over by about $35 million and the Saints by $33 million.

On the other side of the ledger, the Jets, Patriots and Jaguars had the most money available, ranging from $65 million to $67 million.

“I would say, obviously, we’re better positioned than we were this time last year,” Jets general manager Joe Douglas said of free agency. “I would say that our philosophy and stance has not changed however. I think our goal and our plan is to be ... a team that really builds this through the draft and hitting on draft picks, obviously using free agency to supplement our roster. If the opportunity and the value meet, that’s going to be the point where we’re going to be aggressive and get someone that we feel good about, helping this team not only on the field, but with the culture and inside the building.”

Nine players having been given franchise tags: receivers Chris Godwin (Tampa Bay) and Allen Robinson (Chicago); offensive linemen Taylor Moton (Carolina), Cam Robinson (Jacksonville) and All-Pro Brandon Scherff (Washington); safeties Marcus Maye (New York Jets), Marcus Williams (New Orleans) and Justin Simmons (Denver); and defensive tackle Leonard Williams (New York Giants). Their cap numbers are set by the tag designations.

The rest of the free agency crop will be seeking big bucks from a diminished pot.

“If you look league-wide at the available cap dollars, it is like 40% of what it has been in the past,” Andrew Berry, Cleveland’s executive vice president of football operations, said last week. “Look, a year ago at this time, generally speaking, I think everybody across the league thought the cap would be around $210 (million). We were likely $30 million dollars north of that. That means everybody across the league is going to feel that squeeze. We are not excluded from feeling that effect.”

Panthers coach Matt Rhule notes that all 32 teams had months to get ready for the reduced cap and its implications. But the 2020 free agency moves were made under normal operating conditions. Now? Not even close.

“We have been preparing for this, but even going back to last offseason the decisions that you have made and even decisions the last two offseasons when you set some of these contracts, everyone across the league did it thinking the salary cap would be $210 million or $205 million, or something like that,” he said. “It’s a reduction from last year but also a reduction on how you were planning. That is what is making people make really tough decisions. We have known for a while and have had to plan accordingly.”

Washington coach Ron Rivera doesn’t look at the available crop from other clubs so much as what his team could lose. Of course, Washington is roughly $39 million under the number.

“I see it as an opportunity,” he said. “But the thing that everybody seems to forget is you’ve got to sign your own guys. You may have a tremendous amount of cap room, but who don’t you have back on the roster? That’s the thing everybody has to understand. We’ve got to take a look at our guys first, and then we have to go see what we can do and where we can get the next best player available.”

NMC thanks hole-in-one sponsors for upcoming tournament

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Participants in the 2018 NMC Foundation Golf Tournament take time to pose for a photo. This year's competition will take place on March 20 on the east course of the LaoLao Bay Golf Resort

Northern Marianas College's 16th Annual Foundation Golf Tournament, which is set to be held on March 20, 2021 on the east course of the LaoLao Bay Golf Resort, will feature impressive hole-in-one prizes from McDonald's, Pacifica Insurance, Joeten Motors, and Triple J Motors.

Players will get a chance to take home thousands of dollars in cash, vehicles, and other great prizes.

"We are thankful for these companies and their support," NMC interim president Frankie Eliptico said. "We also thank all of the other companies and organizations who have contributed to this year's tournament as well."

Major sponsors for NMC's 16th Annual Golf Tournament include Bank of Guam, Blackwood Furniture, Dial Rent-to-Own, Express Financial, IT&E, Island Training Solutions, J.C.T Enterprises, Inc., KZMI FM, LaoLao Bay Golf and Resort, Marpac, Power 99, Saipan Computer Services, and the Tan Siu Lin Foundation.

Originally scheduled to happen in 2019, the tournament was canceled because of the impact of Super Typhoon Yutu and was rescheduled for March of 2020. However, the COVID-19 pandemic caused the tournament to be postponed again.

This year's tournament will feature six separate flight categories: Championship, A, B, C, Seniors, and Ladies. Cash prizes for this year's tournament include $500 for first place, $300 for second place, and $200 for third place.

The maximum number of golf players has been reached, therefore, registration is closed for this year's tournament. Interested players can still apply to be on the waitlist by emailing NMC Foundation coordinator Carla Sablan at carla.sablan@marianas.edu.

The college is asking companies, organizations, or individuals who are interested in sponsoring holes and/or for any in-kind or cash donation to help support the CNMI's post secondary institution. For more information on how to become a sponsor, please call 237-6780. ***(PR)***

39 registrants for Padyakan Sa Saipan '21

The 2021 Padyakan Sa Saipan cycling event hosted by the Emon Masonic Lodge No. 179 has attracted a total of 39 registrants and will continue to accept registrations until March 20 at 1pm.

Padyakan Sa Saipan will continue to accept online and face-to-face registrations until the day before the event on March 21.

The registration fee of $50 includes a cycling jersey and a ticket to the dinner banquet. Interested cyclists may sign up online at www.strava.com/clubs/699161. Kit packets will also be available at the Rendezvous Restaurant located on the second floor of Saipan Vegas along Middle Road.

The event will feature a 20-kilometer course and a 60-kilometer course. Age categories include 19-and-under, 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-and-up, and open.

The 20-km course stretches from Banzai Cliff to Seafix and is geared toward beginners and are strictly for those who have not participated in any bike races.

The 60-km course will encompass three laps from Banzai Cliff to Seafix and is open to all groups interested.

The Emon Masonic Lodge will award the Top 3 winners with medals and other prizes during the awards ceremony after the race at Banzai Cliff. ***(Kimberly A. Bautista)***

GCA

From Page 24

ings at 5-1 with its only loss courtesy of SIS 2.

Hopwood bested Dan Dan Middle School 2, FMS 1, Cha Cha, Mount Carmel School, and SIS 1.

In its matchup against DMS 2, Hopwood edged its foe, 21-16, in the 2pm match. In its game against FMS 1, Hopwood crushed its opponent, 21-9, before going on to conquer Cha Cha, 21-17.

MCS proved to be a tough nut to crack for Hopwood with the latter winning the set by a mere 2 points, 21-19. Hopwood later overwhelmed SIS 1 21-7. Hopwood lost a nail-biter against SIS 2, 19-21.

TMS closed out the Top 3 in the standings with 4-1 win-loss card with wins against DMS 1 (23-21), SIS 2 (21-17), GCA 2 (21-11), and SIS 1 (21-15).

SIS 2 was fourth in the standings with victories over FMS 1, GCA 2, MCS, and DMS 2. SIS 2 conquered FMS 1 in their 3:30 match, 21-18, before defeating GCA 2, 21-19, at 4:30pm. Later, SIS 2 faced off with MCS to take a 21-14 win. DMS 2 then forfeited its match against SIS 2.

Also playing last Monday were SIS 1, who won three of six games; MCS, who won three of four games; FMS, who won two of five games; Cha Cha, who won two of six games; and DMS 1, DMS 2, and FMS 2, who each won a game.

AYUYUS

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3 points. Later in the finals, SSHS finished just 5 seconds behind KHS at 3:04.

For the prelims and finals of the 1,000m, SSHS lagged behind KHS by 13 seconds completing the races in 6:30 and 6:53, respectively.

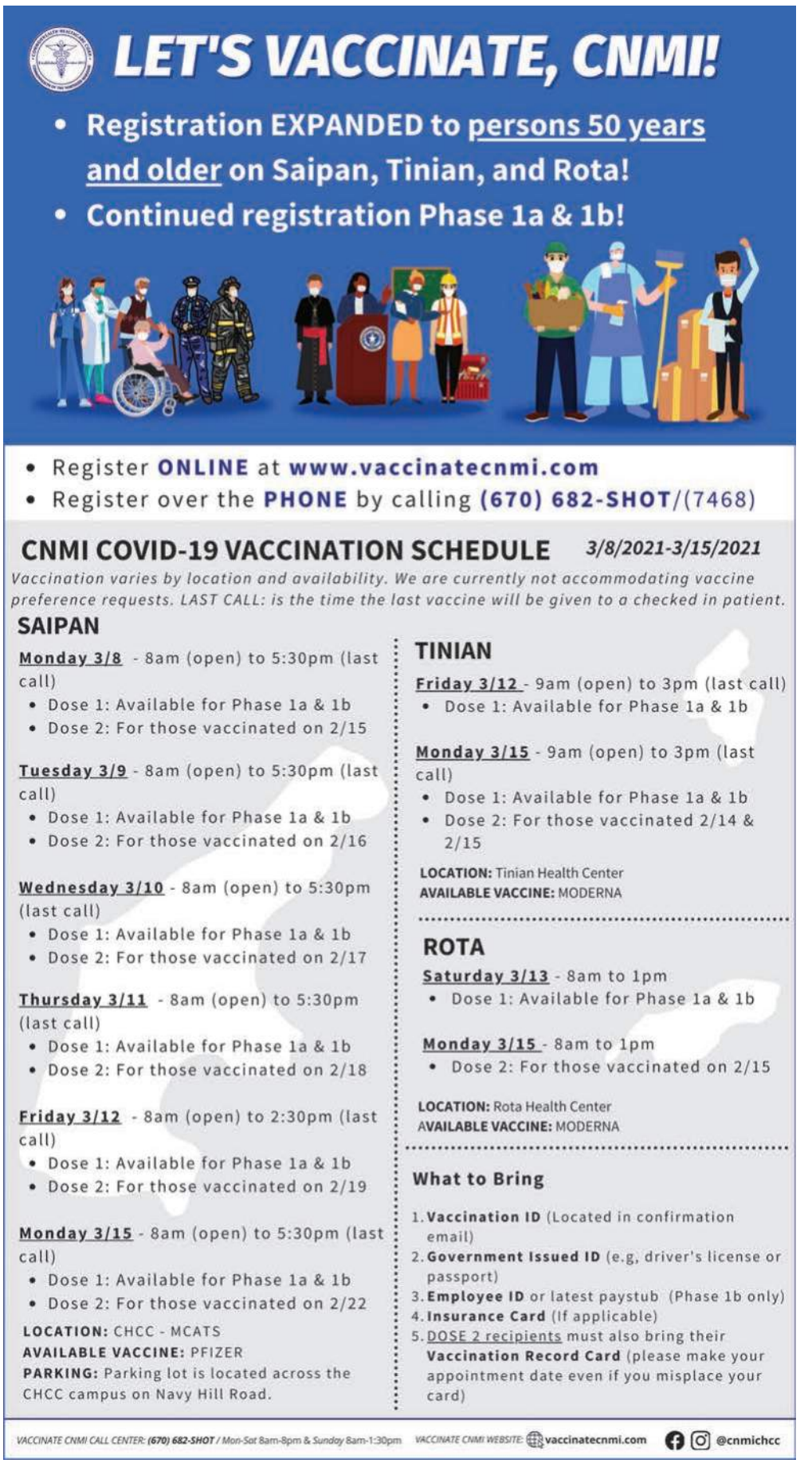
Marianas High School currently holds third place with a score of 15 points. MHS completed the prelims of the 500m dash at 3:04 and the finals at 3:08.

For the 1,000m, the Dolphins came in last finishing the preliminaries at 6:57. MHS improved slightly in the finals to complete the round in 6:38.

In the co-ed division, KHS also holds the No. 1 spot on the leaderboard with 38 points, but not by a large margin.

SSHS is only 14 points behinds with an overall score of 24. The co-ed Manta Rays still have a shot at conquering KHS in the championships since points are doubled.

MHS currently stands in the No. 3 sport with an overall score of 10.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• Registration EXPANDED to persons 50 years and older on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota!
• Continued registration Phase 1a & 1b!
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• Register over the PHONE by calling (670) 682-SHOT/(7468)
CNMI COVID-19 VACCINATION SCHEDULE 3/8/2021-3/15/2021
Vaccination varies by location and availability. We are currently not accommodating vaccine preference requests. LAST CALL: is the time the last vaccine will be given to a checked in patient.
SAIPAN
Monday 3/8 - 8am (open) to 5:30pm (last call)
• Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 1b
• Dose 2: For those vaccinated on 2/15
Tuesday 3/9 - 8am (open) to 5:30pm (last call)
• Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 1b
• Dose 2: For those vaccinated on 2/16
Wednesday 3/10 - 8am (open) to 5:30pm (last call)
• Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 1b
• Dose 2: For those vaccinated on 2/17
Thursday 3/11 - 8am (open) to 5:30pm (last call)
• Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 1b
• Dose 2: For those vaccinated on 2/18
Friday 3/12 - 8am (open) to 2:30pm (last call)
• Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 1b
• Dose 2: For those vaccinated on 2/19
Monday 3/15 - 8am (open) to 5:30pm (last call)
• Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 1b
• Dose 2: For those vaccinated on 2/22
LOCATION: CHCC - MCATS
AVAILABLE VACCINE: PFIZER
PARKING: Parking lot is located across the CHCC campus on Navy Hill Road.
TINIAN
Friday 3/12 - 9am (open) to 3pm (last call)
• Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 1b
Monday 3/15 - 9am (open) to 3pm (last call)
• Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 1b
• Dose 2: For those vaccinated 2/14 & 2/15
LOCATION: Tinian Health Center
AVAILABLE VACCINE: MODERNA
ROTA
Saturday 3/13 - 8am to 1pm
• Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 1b
Monday 3/15 - 8am to 1pm
• Dose 2: For those vaccinated on 2/15
LOCATION: Rota Health Center
AVAILABLE VACCINE: MODERNA
What to Bring
1. Vaccination ID (Located in confirmation email)
2. Government Issued ID (e.g, driver's license or passport)
3. Employee ID or latest paystub (Phase 1b only)
4. Insurance Card (If applicable)
5. DOSE 2 recipients must also bring their Vaccination Record Card (please make your appointment date even if you misplace your card)
VACCINATE CNMI CALL CENTER: (670) 682-SHOT / Mon-Sat 8am-8pm & Sunday 8am-1:30pm
VACCINATE CNMI WEBSITE: vaccinatecnmi.com
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Embiid emerges as NBA MVP front-runner for East-best 76ers

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Sports

'Healthy' Prescott signs richest contract in Cowboys history

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Ayuyus zero in on title repeat

ROSELYN MONROYO
Kagman High School men's paddling team in action in last Saturday's fourth leg of the 2020-2021 Public School System Interscholastic High School Canoe Series in the waters off Kilili Beach.

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

Kagman High School inched closer to securing the title for the second year in a row in the men's division of the 2020-2021 Public School System Interscholastic High School Canoe Series after a perfect fourth leg of the series last Saturday in the waters off Kilili Beach.

The Ayuyus widened the gap between its opponents by sweeping all four rounds of the fourth leg to gain an additional 20 points. After last Saturday's round of races, KHS is moving into the championships with an overall score of 45.

KHS completed the preliminary round of the 500m dash in 2:48 to take first place and gained 5 points. They later came back to take first place in the finals completing the course in 2:58 for another 5 points

In the 1,000m, KHS completed the preliminary round in first place with a time of 6:16 and took first again in the finals submitting a time of 6:21 for a total of 10 more points.

Saipan Southern High School, who holds the No. 2 spot on the leaderboard, is a whopping 24 points behind the Ayuyus.

Although it is nearly impossible given KHS' spotless track record for the season, the only way the Manta Rays could pull the rug from under the defending champions is if the group takes first place in all four rounds of the championships and KHS falls to third in at least two rounds. Since points will be doubled for the championships, sweeping the entire four rounds would add an additional 40 points to bring the team to 61.

SSHS came just 12 seconds behind KHS in the preliminary round of the 500m dash with a time of 3:00 to earn

See AYUYUS on Page 23

ROSELYN MONROYO
Kagman High School co-ed team in action in last Saturday's fourth leg of the 2020-2021 Public School System Interscholastic High School Canoe Series in the waters off Kilili Beach.

GCA 1 dominant as grass v-ball kicks off

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

Grace Christian Academy 1 showed it can adapt to a new playing surface as it went undefeated in last Monday's start of the boys division of the 2021 Middle School Grass Volleyball League at the Commonwealth Ports Authority Airport Field.

GCA 1, made up of Sui Yi, Kyle Moon, Tristan Raho, Theodore Rodgers, Tyron Joe Saures, and Kenny Zhang, took the early lead in standings after sweeping all five of its matches.

GCA 1 flexed from the get-go, coasting by GCA 2, Tinian Middle School, Saipan International School 1, Francisco M. Sablan Middle School 1, and ChaCha Oceanview Middle School.

In its first matchup of the day against GCA 2 at around 3:30pm, GCA 1 hammered its sister team, 21-6. In its second match at around 4:30pm, GCA 1 eased past TMS, 21-12. In its next match against SIS 1 at 5pm, GCA 1 took an easy 21-5 win. Later at 5:30pm, GCA 1 topped FMS 1, 21-12, followed by its conquest of Cha Cha, 21-5.

Hopwood Middle School finished No. 2 in the stand-

See GCA on Page 23

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Sui Yi serves the ball at the start of the boys division of the 2020-2021 Middle School 4v4 Grass Volleyball Tournament last Monday at the Commonwealth Ports Authority Airport Field.